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THE CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRACY

THE Premier's well-wishers in every Party hoped he would resist the temptation to run this election as a personal plebiscite. But "Vote Churchill" has been the sum total of his campaign. For the false position in which is now placed he has only himself—and Lord Beaverbrook—to blame. After paying deserved tribute to Labour colleagues who have shared the burden of war with him, he has stooped to hint that they would betray their country if they won the election. It is hard to see on what terms Mr. Attlee can now accompany the Premier to Germany, or what future co-operation is possible. The Premier has even appealed for a vote of confidence to strengthen his hands at the meeting of the Big Three, though the meeting is apparently to take place before the poll is declared. The grave issues of foreign politics, the difficult problems of housing, employment, and the future of industry—all these are brushed aside in favour of a series of derisory scares.

It was deplorable that the Prime Minister should again return to the Laski balderdash in his final broadcast. A feeling of complete bewilderment must come upon any elector who takes the trouble to contrast the facts of the Laski episode with the picture of it in the Beaverbrook Press or in Mr. Churchill's recent letters to Mr. Attlee. The original correspondence between Mr. Churchill and Mr. Attlee showed that there was not, and could not, be any disagreement about the status of Mr. Attlee in Berlin, while there was not a single sentence in any of Mr. Laski's utterances to give the faintest justification for Mr. Churchill's talk about the dictatorship of a Labour caucus. If we were looking for a secret dictatorship, we should cite, not the influence of the National Executive of the Labour Party, but the pressure of bankers and press barons. The development of this stunt is an instructive example of the advertising technique of irrational suggestion applied to politics.

As for continuity of foreign policy, whatever other criticisms we or Mr. Churchill may have of the Labour Party, its record in support of the League and collective security between the two wars was untarnished, while Mr. Churchill, who ultimately abandoned his bitter attacks on Russia and his praise of Franco in order to lead resistance to Hitlerism, was kept out of office by the Conservatives until 1939, and only permitted to be Premier when the Opposition Parties refused to join a Coalition with Mr. Chamberlain. During this period Lord Beaverbrook was welcoming Ribbentrop to this country (in March, 1938) as an "ambassador of peace, sincerely seeking it," and coupling his constant assurances that there would be no war, with an isolationist policy whose "continuity" would have delivered this country enslaved to Germany.

Mr. Churchill owes much to Labour; he boasts of still being a great Liberal. To the Tories, whose record he has denounced in majestic terms, he owes his long political isolation. Yet on his tour through London he chooses as his companion Lord Margesson, who, as Chamberlain's Chief Whip, so long kept him in the wilderness. From the opening sentences of his first broadcast down to the last words of his final appeal to the electors, Mr. Churchill's exhibition is the most unhappy example of descent from the stature of a great national leader to that of an unscrupulous vote-catching politician, with "too much Ego in his Cosmos." This Führer approach to an election in which a large part of the electorate had hoped to have the opportunity of listening to a serious argument of principle and exposition of programmes has done great damage to British institutions: it has increased cynicism; it has damaged the idea of reason in national affairs. In the hour of national victory Mr. Churchill has done much to discredit the democracy for which the nation fought.

Monarchist Putsch in Greece?

The latest reports from Athens tell of increased activity by the Military League and other Monarchist organisations. Proscription lists are being drafted, not merely of "dangerous" elements in the armed forces but also of civilians. Mass arrests and searches are taking place, many people being placed under "protective custody." The Royalist paper *Vradyni* published on Tuesday an article by Tsaldaris, a leading Monarchist, calling for the suppression of the anti-national activities of the extreme Left. The same paper reported that the Government was ready to take any steps necessary to "maintain order." A memorandum has been sent to the Greek Prime Minister by the former leaders of E.A.M. complaining of the widespread prosecutions of Resistance fighters. They are now sentenced for "crime" against Italian, German and Bulgar occupation troops, on the grounds that these acts demonstrated their membership of E.A.M. The signatories to this memorandum include Professors Svolos and Angelopoulos, as well as the Communist and Socialist members. As Svolos represents the Liberal, rather than the E.A.M. standpoint, his signature is an indication how grave the situation is. It is seriously suggested by those in touch with Right Wing Greek opinion that, while the British Ambassador to Athens is conveniently in London, the Greek Royalists are planning a putsch, timed to take place at a moment when the House of Commons is dissolved and British policy is in the hands of the "caretakers."

Strategic Zones

The Soviet Note, expressing desire for full participation in the Paris talks on the future status of Tangier, should occasion no surprise. It is true that under the 1923 settlement only Britain, France and Spain were directly concerned in the administration of the international zone; but, when it was decided to invite the United States to send a representative to the Paris conversations, no case was left for excluding the Russians. In announcing American acceptance of the invitation, the U.S. State Department has emphasised that the end of the European War means that there is no longer any justification for the presence in Tangier of the forces which Franco sent there in June, 1940, ostensibly to preserve the zone's neutrality; and that the U.S.A., by virtue of treaties, has a "special position" in Morocco. The plain truth is that Tangier is strategically one of the keys to the Mediterranean, and its future status involves questions of world security whose settlement, without both American and Russian agreement, is impossible. The same considerations apply in the case of the Dardanelles, whose future is as much a matter for all the leading Powers of the United Nations as Tangier. At this end of the Mediterranean the right of the U.S.S.R. to have assurances against the possibility of hostile control of the Straits is incontrovertible; but the attitude of Turkey is by no means the only factor in the problem. If there be truth in reports that Moscow is seeking a bilateral deal with Ankara—condominium over the Dardanelles against territorial gains by Turkey at the expense of Syria—we should say that Russian diplomacy is working on the wrong lines. Freedom of transit from Black Sea to Mediterranean depends essentially on the whole "set-up"—spheres of influence, naval and air bases—in the Ægean and Levant. In other words, on frank and friendly understanding by all the Big Three and France.

The French and Syria

Meanwhile, in default of impartial inquiry (for which it asked) by the United Nations into the Syrian dispute, the French Government is believed to have sent General Beynet's political adviser, Count Ostrorog, back from Paris to Beirut with a fresh set of instructions designed, it is hoped, to pave the way for a settlement. Two conditions, we judge, are indispensable: control of the *troupes spéciales* must be handed over to the Syrian and Lebanon authorities without more ado; and French recognition of the right of these two States to "independence" must be unequivocably reaffirmed. That done, the Syrians and Lebanese might well be more ready than they are at present to admit that in the exercise by France of her Mandate there have been substantial credit items. It is untrue that the French have only "milked the cow without feeding it"; they have developed roads and public services, increased by 50 per cent. the area of land under cultivation, and carried out an extensive educational campaign. We are entitled to assume from Mr. Churchill's solemn disclaimer that it is no part now of British policy to supplant France in the Levant. If Count Ostrorog's mission leads to better understanding in Beirut, our contribution to a settlement must be the withdrawal from Syria of British forces. Their presence would have no justification once orderly conditions had been restored.

De Gaulle and the Constitution

There has never been agreement among the French about the method by which the constitution of the Fourth Republic should be drafted. Ever since the bitter division in Algiers, in 1943, over the electoral procedure to be employed after liberation, this controversy has been growing in importance. It can no longer be shelved. It is almost certain that the elections will be held this autumn: but elections for what? For a Constituent Assembly? For a bicameral Assembly which would assume legislative functions until a new constitution has been drafted? Or will there be—as some quarters close to de Gaulle are suggesting—a kind of plebiscite on a draft or drafts for the constitution? The Left, which the recent municipal elections revealed as having an overwhelming majority, wants to dispense entirely with the old constitution and elect an entirely new single chamber Assembly charged with the task of drawing up a new democratic constitution. The moderates desire a revised version of the old structure, with a lower chamber based on universal suffrage, and a chamber, somewhat similar to the old Senate, resting on a more restricted franchise. General de Gaulle, whose own inclinations seem to favour something on the model of the American system, with extensive executive powers for the President, is in a dilemma. He has already failed to reconstruct his Cabinet to reflect the results of the municipal elections. At one time he approved the proposals now put forward by the Left. To-day he tends to support the moderates, fearing, no doubt, that a single chamber elected by universal suffrage would be dominated by the Socialists and Communists. This is a vital decision. In the hands of his Cabinet rests the responsibility for choosing the form in which the issue is presented to the electorate. The General, it is reported, is endeavouring to coerce the Left by threatening to resign.

Reconstruction in Hungary

Hungary is gradually recovering from devastation. Most of the public services and some of the bridges destroyed in Budapest are in working condition again; food is still very scarce, but in the rural areas, where the greater part of the land was untilled at the time of the "liberation," great efforts are being made to restore productivity. Meanwhile, long overdue land reform is going ahead. Political power rests with the "National Independence Front," comprising three large and two small parties. The Communists hold the greatest number of seats in the Legislative Assembly; close to them in strength is the Independent Smallholders', Landworkers' and Citizens' Party, which has freed itself from the equivocal leadership of Dr. Eckhardt (now in the United States), and has developed into the main rallying point of the progressive farmers and the urban middle classes. These two parties, together with the Social Democrats, have a solid majority in the Assembly, as well as in all Councils and Committees responsible for the administration of the country; but representation has also been secured by their two junior parties, the National Peasants and the Democratic Citizens' Party. The latter is an amalgamation of the remnants of various pre-liberation groups, Conservative and Progressive. Inside this five-party bloc there are differences in which the Communists have been acting frequently as mediators: recently, for instance, they rebuked a somewhat erratic National Peasant leader for advocating an anti-capitalist drive which, it was urged, might endanger the existence of the Independence Front. On other occasions the Communists have led attacks against Right Wing officials—notably against Faragho, the Minister of Supply, former commander of the dissolved Gendarmerie, and author of a book which has recently been black-listed as "anti-Soviet" by his own Government. Faragho—perhaps on the strength of his services to Hungary and the Soviet in the last phase of the war—has so far retained his post.

Labour Shortage and Direction

There is every sign that the shortage of manpower in civilian industry generally is likely to remain acute for some time to come. Many of the pre-war industries have been kept going through the war years largely by elderly workers whose retirement is already overdue, and many of them are likely to feel unequal to facing another winter. Many women who can get away are leaving wartime jobs in order to return home and do what they can to find houses and get them ready for returning husbands; and a good many other married women are eager to get away from uncongenial forms of employment. The building industry will absorb a large proportion of the returning soldiers who have not definite trades outside it to go back to; the mining industry is crying out for recruits; and the transport services are also badly in need of additional workers. Moreover, though men are being released, others in the younger age-groups are being called up. In these circumstances, ordinary industries making civilian supplies will not find it easy to man their factories, even when these can be released from war uses and put back fairly quickly into order for normal production. That is one reason why it is obviously necessary to maintain some direction of labour during the change-over. Some attempts have been made during the election to represent the Trade Unions as hostile to this continuance; but, in fact, the Trades Union Congress has fully recognised the need, and has protested only against the continued use of one-sided penal sanctions.

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The Miners' Policy

Mr. Will Lawther, in his presidential address to the first annual conference of the new National Union of Mineworkers, made a vigorous attack on the colliery owners both for their failure to tackle the essential problems of reorganisation and for their attitude of unrelenting hostility to the miners. He pointed to the niggardly and obstructive treatment of compensation questions in cases of accident and disease as contributing largely to the strong feeling among the miners. He emphasised that there can be no solution of the output problem that does not resolve the human antagonisms which are at present paralysing the industry. In this connection he gave a cordial welcome to the decision to alter the whole basis of compensation so as to make it no longer a matter of individual claims at law, but a branch of the unified social insurance service; but he pleaded at the same time for higher rates, without which he held that it would be impossible to raise recruitment for the industry to a level sufficient to make good wastage. On the question of reorganisation, he welcomed the Reid Report, but denied the possibility of carrying through the heavy outlays needed for re-equipment of the industry except under public ownership. A few of the largest concerns, he said, might be in a position to raise the capital needed for re-equipping their own collieries; but this would leave the greater part of the industry unaffected, and would entirely fail to bring down costs or increase output per man-shift to the required extent. Moreover, Mr. Lawther argued, matters had gone too far for it to be possible to enlist the miners' co-operation in reorganising the industry under the control of the owners. He therefore roundly condemned both the Foot Plan and the policy announced by the Government just before the dissolution of Parliament.

The Future of the I.L.O.

It is still very much an open question how the International Labour Organisation will fit into the new structure set up at San Francisco. The San Francisco decisions themselves make no mention of the I.L.O., which is merely one of the international functional organisations that are to come within the purview of the Economic and Social Council of the new body. Attention was so largely focussed both at Dumbarton Oaks and at San Francisco on the political and security aspects of the World Organisation that its economic and social functions are still very shadowy. The I.L.O. Council, meeting last week in Quebec, decided to fall in with the San Francisco decisions, and to call a full conference to meet in October, probably in Paris, for discussion of the functions of the I.L.O. in relation to the post-war set-up of international co-operation. One difficulty, of course, is the tri-partite structure of the I.L.O., with its separate representation of governments, employers and Trade Unions. This does not fit the pattern of a Socialist economy any better than it fitted the totalitarian pattern of Germany, Italy and Japan. Nevertheless, room must be found for the I.L.O. in the new system; and the Charter drawn up at Philadelphia has already marked out for it a number of essential tasks. States which are not members of the I.L.O., but are signatories to the San Francisco agreement, are being invited to send observers to the October Conference, when Italy's application to resume membership will also receive consideration.

Steel Workers on Steel

The Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, in a manifesto issued last week, accuses the (employers') Iron and Steel Federation of intending to maintain after the war a restrictive policy inconsistent with full employment. The Federation, they say, is planning for a post-war capacity, including reserve plant, of about 15 million tons, and for a yearly output of between 10 and 12 million tons. Pointing out that this is well below the expected requirements of the market over the next fifteen or twenty years, and that the Federation is proposing to eke out home supplies with imports, the Confederation demands an increase of capacity to between 18 and 20 million tons, with a corresponding rise in output and a thorough modernisation of the industry in all its branches. It does indeed appear extraordinary, in face of the probable level of demand for capital goods both at home and for export, that the steel industry should be contemplating a considerable dependence of the British steel-finishing and steel-using trades on imported supplies. No doubt this is inevitable if the industry means to return to its pre-war policy of high prices and market-sharing But the origins of this pre-war policy lay in the domination of the European arena by the German steel producers. The Federation can hardly be proposing so soon to reconstruct the cartel on the old lines. British industry needs cheap steel and more steel; and without cheap steel our engineers and motor manufacturers may whistle for exports. But the Steel Federation seems set on getting back to its old monopoly position.

Freedom of the Press

The Australian Newspaper Proprietors' Association is concerning itself actively with a freedom implicit in the aspirations of the Atlantic Charter—the right of the Press to report and comment on news without governmental interference. It proposes to hold a conference in Australia towards the end of this year, attended by fifty representatives of the English-speaking Press, whose task it will be to frame recommendations dealing with censorship and other controls instituted during the war, the use of propaganda as an instrument of administration, and the dangers inherent in monopoly ownership of channels of communication. The A.N.P.A., of course, has a highly individualistic outlook, and has frequently complained of the Commonwealth Government's "totalitarian" attitude towards the Press. In Britain and America the public may be more inclined to complain that some newspaper proprietors construe freedom as licence to misreport and mislead. But the whole question of the functions of newspapers in the United Nations—and, not least, the freedom of access by correspondents to all areas—is of such importance that the conference is well worth while.

TRIAL AND JUDGEMENT

The shouting dies down; the unsolved problems remain. Whatever Government gets into power at the end of this month, it will be a Government on trial. It will be regarded by its supporters and opponents alike as the recipient of a mandate, not merely to "finish the job" with victory in the Far East and the ratification of European Peace, but to create in this country conditions of prosperity and contentment. Though no politician this time was so bold, or unwary, as to talk of "a land fit for heroes to live in," this was in fact a promise implicit in the professions of all Parties. The electorate will soon be looking for delivery of the goods.

Not necessarily all at once. The British people, whose mentality the Prime Minister and Lord Beaverbrook have treated with such contempt, have enough common sense to realise that many of the problems with which this country is faced require time for their solution, whatever means be adopted. The restoration of Britain's foreign trade—with its corollary, the determination of how much food, of what sorts, we are to produce at home; the rehabilitation of obsolete plant and methods in basic industries; the reorganisation of health services and education: these are all matters in which the electorate will be ready to give any new Government reasonable rope, either to produce results or hang itself. But there is one issue in which the nation will not be patient for long. The insistent demand of the demobilised soldiers, the returning evacuees, the disbanded war workers, will be to have a decent roof over their heads, at a rent which will leave them something over for food and clothing and the other necessaries and moderate amenities of living.

Houses, like armaments, take time to prepare for and to mass-produce; and any Government, however well it now handles the problem, will suffer the penalties of past neglect. If proper plans had been made, as they could have been, say, in 1942, the outlook would have been very different to-day. If the Uthwatt Report had been promptly accepted, the local authorities and the State, acting together, would have been in a position to plan the use of land in rebuilding blitzed areas and in creating new suburbs and new towns. Sites would have been reserved for temporary housing so as not to interfere with permanent housing plans; the vexed question of compensation and betterment would have been settled, and both national and local planners would have known where they stood. Secondly, by 1942 an orderly plan could have been made for turning over war factories with the least possible delay to the manufacture of housing components under public control; and the necessary jigging and re-tooling could have been all worked out well in advance. Thirdly, there could have been a special plan for the release of skilled builders from the forces and the factories, and for their use in training additional labour to fill up the sorely depleted ranks of the building industry.

All these things could have been done. They were not done: the locusts have eaten the years. But there is a further aspect of the housing problem, which is fully as important as the production of houses. That is, what are they going to cost, and at what rents are they to be made available to those who need them? In the election the Tories have been making play with their intention to use every possible source of supply, and to give equal treatment to public and private enterprise. This sounds very well; but what subsidies will have to be paid in order to get houses built at payable rents or selling prices, unless there is both a determined effort to get building costs down, and an absolute insistence on getting the houses built with capital raised at the lowest possible rate of interest? On a house costing £1,000, every 1 per cent. paid in interest means 4*s*. on the rent, not including rates, which will also rise with the rent. The State can build houses with capital raised at 2 per cent., 2½ per cent., or at the very most 3 per cent. At what rate is private enterprise expected to build? Certainly it will not be content to operate except at a much higher rate of return.

The other side of the question is that of building costs. Without effective standardisation and controlled mass production regulated by accurate costings it is impossible, above all in the building industry, to get components turned out at reasonable prices; and labour on the site will continue to be fantastically expensive until the work has been drastically rationalised and a big training scheme, adequately staffed by skilled instructors, has had time to produce its effect.

There is no sign that, if the Tories get back to power, even one of the essential things will get done. There will be a great bustle, no doubt; but the problem is insoluble until the land question has been cleared up, and until it has been firmly decided to entrust the job to public bodies in full control of the industries supplying materials and components and also authorised to act on the basis of really cheap capital. These issues will take some courageous handling even if Labour is in power: what hope is there that they will be tackled at all by the Tories, with vested interests bristling round them on every side?

Yet this, we repeat, is the issue which will determine the next Government's tenure of power. The people of this country may be indulgent towards pleas that the coal and steel industries cannot be rebuilt (whether it be by private enterprise or under State control) in a day; that it will take time fully to reabsorb displaced labour in all trades; that shortages—be it of doctors, teachers or consumers' goods—cannot be overcome by a stroke of the pen. What they will not forgive is signs of hesitation or timidity in dealing with the housing shortage. Whether the responsibility for it lies, or is said to lie, with price-rings, owners of land, apathetic local authorities or what you will, failure in housing policy will mean swift and inexorable judgment on the new administration's performance.

THE PROSPECT IN CHINA

Eight years have passed since the Japanese invaded China. For the first four years the Chinese fought alone, receiving very little aid from Britain or from America, which up to the eve of Pearl Harbour was supplying Tokio with scrap-iron and other munitions of war. During this period Chinese morale was high. Chiang Kai-shek's fame as the leader under whom China was more united than ever before in her history, made the world forget his reputation as head of the Blue Shirt organisation which ten years earlier had so ruthlessly hunted down the progressive young Chinese movement which was then only partly Communist. At first, under Chiang's leadership, after 1937, democracy developed apace. People's Co-operatives sprang into being; the civilian population as well as the soldiers displayed extraordinary heroism. Popular enthusiasm for China spread throughout America and Britain.

After the American disaster at Pearl Harbour and the British loss of Singapore, Malaya and Burma, China was effectively cut off from the West. Supplies, exiguous enough before, ceased to reach Chungking except by the dangerous and limited air route over the Himalayas. Bitterly disappointed with their Western Allies, and no longer receiving any help from the U.S.S.R., which was itself desperately besieged, the Chinese began to lose heart: corruption increased; inflation soared; large numbers of Kuomintang troops, from hunger, despair and disorganisation, ceased to fight. In the summer of 1944 the Chinese Army, ill-equipped and undernourished, completely failed to resist the Japanese advance to Kweilin, which completed their hold on the whole length of the Peiping-Hankow railway. It is no longer a secret that hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops began to look for food and payment to Chinese quislings. Moreover, about half a million of the better Kuomintang troops had long been withdrawn from the fight against the Japanese and used as a blockade force between the Communist armies of the north and the remaining provinces of Free China.

This was a situation which the United States was unable to ignore. By 1944 the Americans had established air bases in Kiangsi and Fukien, many of which were lost through Chinese failure to defend them. Looking ahead, General Stilwell, in charge of the American contingents in China, was aware that it would become necessary, sooner or later, for the United States forces to invade China. They would need the aid of a reliable and well-equipped Chinese army which might be only a fraction of the size of the nominal Kuomintang armies, but which could act effectively against the Japanese rear when the Americans advanced. He was withdrawn after he had repeatedly pressed his case against the Generalissimo, who could not be persuaded to move against the Japanese more than a few of the troops that were immobilised against the Communists, and who was unable to cope with inflation, or to organise the immense areas that were nominally under his control. The Generalissimo was hampered by lack of transport and the breakdown of communications, which left vast areas completely cut off from Chungking. To reduce the size and improve the quality of his armies was also a matter of the greatest difficulty; they were too often in the pay of provincial governors and generals, whose incomes depended on the number of troops under their command. Chiang Kai-shek has proved unable to end this system, which is as militarily inefficient as it is morally corrupting. The steps he took towards broadening the basis of his government and winning it popular support by economic reform were far too narrowly conceived. The Generalissimo, however, has continued to be an important unifying factor, since he stood firmly against those dubious elements of the Kuomintang who were widely suspected of being ready to come to terms with the Japanese.

It was not until the summer of 1944 that the truth about the Communist area of China began to reach the outside world. Chungking censorship is ludicrously severe, and until last August the blockade of the Border Regions was complete. A change came when four American journalists, as well as representatives of the Chinese press, gained permission, after persistent pressure, to visit Yenan, the capital of the Communist areas, where American airmen had already helped the Communists to set up a powerful radio station. A number of reliable and independent accounts of the Border Regions have now been published in Britain and the United States. Whatever the political views of these first-hand observers, they agree that the Border Regions contrast sharply with the Kuomintang areas in discipline, efficiency, fighting quality, popular support, and, above all, in administrative honesty. A huge area, with meagre resources and very poor soil, has been efficiently organised on democratic lines. The economic basis of Communist policy has been not Socialism but agrarian reform. The regime appears to have the support of the mass of the sixty million or more peasants under its control. The army, lightly armed with home-made weapons or with rifles and machine-guns captured from the Japanese, not only defended itself but contrived greatly to extend the area of its guerilla activities. It has been only recently revealed that guerilla forces in touch with Yenan have been able to carry Chinese resistance through the Japanese-occupied areas as far as the sea coast both in Shantung and to regions near Canton. Chinese Communist guerillas are active in half the area occupied by the Japanese, and it is clear, as a correspondent of *The Times* remarked last week, that if the Americans invade China they are more likely to find Communist than Kuomintang armies waiting to join forces with them.

During the last twelve months Chiang Kai-shek has been induced to enter into prolonged but abortive negotiations with Yenan. The reason for the failure of these discussions can be simply explained. Chungking accuses the Communists of breaking the terms agreed upon when the united front between the Kuomintang and the Communists was formed in 1937, and in particular of greatly exceeding the number of troops who were to serve under Communist command.

During the intervention of General Hurley, who for a time acted as intermediary, Chungking reached the point of offering the Communists some seats in the Central Government of China, and a matter of ten divisions under Communist officers, subject, of course, to the command of Chiang Kai-shek himself. The Communist reply was that they could not give up the autonomy of their armies unless the government of China was completely remodelled on a democratic basis. They derided the pretence that the entry of two or three Communists into the government would provide the substance of democracy or safeguard their freedom or that of other political parties; the real power in China rests with the secret police and the Kuomintang party machine. Nor could they see any considerable advance in Chiang's announcement of a National Assembly next autumn. Most of the delegates are nominees of the Kuomintang; many of them were actually nominated before the war began. This Assembly will not in any way represent China. On these points the non-Communist progressive elements in Free China, some of whom have formed their own organisation in the Democratic League, broadly support the Communist contention. In a word, Chungking wishes to break the influence of the Communist party and its organisation by bringing it under the control of the Kuomintang; the Communists, who point out with force that they alone are fighting effectively against the Japanese, refuse to give up their separate organisation and army while the bitterly reactionary Kuomintang machine continues to control the Government of China. The deadlock appears now to have become complete.

China is thus divided into two parts, ideological rather than geographical. How this schism is to be healed or how civil war in the future is to be avoided, is not yet clear. Much depends upon the attitude of Soviet Russia. In some circles in Washington it is put about that Russian help against Japan is neither necessary nor desirable—which is nonsense if the object is to save the lives of soldiers and to end the war as soon as possible. If Russia, which already has large forces concentrated in the Far East, seizes Japan's sources of heavy industry in Manchuria, prolonged Japanese resistance on the Asiatic mainland is scarcely possible. Some Americans profess to fear that Russia intends to enter the war when Japan is already nearly defeated, and permanently to occupy Manchuria and even Korea. This is mere speculation. It is certainly probable that if there is a general scramble for strategic positions in Asia, Russia, which used to hold Port Arthur, will take a hand in the game. All we can say with confidence is that since the Chinese guerillas in Manchuria are much influenced by the success of the Soviet Union, it is likely that at the end of the Far Eastern war Russia's position in the Far East will be strengthened. The U.S.S.R. may also be expected at some point to abandon the extremely "correct" diplomatic attitude she has so far adopted towards the Chinese Communists. In a word, there is great danger that American Big Business, although fully aware of the character of the Chungking administration, may yet back reactionary forces in southern China, while the northern area looks increasingly to Russia for support and becomes increasingly Communist in outlook. In that case the situation in Asia will be closely parallel to that in Europe.

The obvious dangers of such a division may yet be avoided in both Continents. T. V. Soong —perhaps the only representative of Chungking who is acceptable in all the capitals of the United Nations—has been much in Washington, had long talks with Mr. Molotov in San Francisco, and is now paying a visit to Moscow. Profound secrecy covers the nature of his mission, but we may hope that it is the beginning of conversations that may lead to a Far Eastern understanding similar to that expected from the Big Three in Berlin. In both cases the fundamental issues are the same. Strategically there is a choice between a scramble for bases and a real United Nations policy of co-operation. Similarly in the economic field. Both in Europe and Asia the popular forces, which have grown in strength as the result of their resistance to the invading Power, must in the long run triumph over the remnants of an outworn system that fears social changes at home at least as much as conquest from abroad. Western capitalism, if it it true to its old traditions, is incapable of maintaining control either in the undeveloped interior of China or in the Europe that is rising from the ashes of the war. In both cases, if Russia acts with moderation, and the West is primarily concerned with profits, the populace will turn increasingly to Communism. War will be difficult to avoid only if the Soviet Union overplays her hand and the West is incapable of learning. Russia has everything to gain by relying on her immense prestige and on the example of successful Socialist planning; the West has equally everything to gain by repudiating a policy of exploitation and raising the standard of backward countries, which will thereby become a willing market for its exports. The advantages of such a policy were clearly appreciated by Henry Wallace and accepted as the right "middle way" by Mr. Roosevelt. If the present Big Three can maintain this conception, agreed policy on reconstruction in Asia as well as Europe is possible.

YOU ARE OLD, FATHER WINSTON

What can I say to you of girls and women whose beauty charmed the eye?—From the Prime Minister's broadcast, July 1st.

"You are old, Father Winston," the wee W.A.A.F. said,
"And your hair has become very white,
So why are you busily turning my head?
Do you think at your age it is right?"

"In my youth," said the sage, "when compliments flew
Fair maidens responded to flattery,
And I hope pretty speeches will go down with you,
Although you've been manning a battery."

"You're a beau," said the housewife, "but I am no belle,
And I fear you're a terrible teaser,
For six years of war I've been looking like hell,
So come orf it, you artful old geezer."

"In my youth," said the sage, "we paid tributes to grace,
Of an old-fashioned, frivolous flavour.
And I think kind remarks on your figure and face
Are a sure way of winning your favour."

"You're a scream," said the land-girl and factory lass,
"But we think you're an awful old shammer,
For we see every day when we look in the glass,
What wartime has done to our glamour."

"In my eyes," said the sage, "you will always be fair,
For you shine with devotion to duty,
No ladies I know of can even compare
With England and Scotland for beauty."

"You are old," said the women, "but what is your game
When you praise our appearance so nicely?
You certainly have some ulterior aim,
What do you want of us, precisely?"

"You are greatly mistaken," responded the sage,
"The sight of you gives me such pleasure,
Fair ladies, you make me feel just half my age,
And your kindness I greatly would treasure."

"Go on, you old fraud," was the ladies' reply,
With a burst of demoniac laughter.
"Who are you kidding"? and "That's all my eye!
You'd better explain what you're after."

"You are changed," said the sage, "from the ladies of yore,
But, dear creatures, I'm crazy about you.
Your vote, lovely ladies, is what I implore—
I can't win the election without you."

SAGITTARIUS

A LONDON DIARY

THE rowdyism of this election has, I think, been grossly exaggerated. There has been booing of course and much defacing of posters. In one area I visited the Tories pasted their bills on the top of Labour posters; Labour men retorted by painting Socialist slogans on the top. But my own impression is of quiet, serious, but lively meetings. Sometimes very odd questions were asked. The oddest I came across was: "When Labour disestablishes the Church, what will it do with Queen Anne's Bounty?"

* * *

I have been impressed, in watching candidates in this election, with the advantage of quiet, well-informed sincerity. A brilliant young Left-wing candidate for whom I spoke excelled at answering questions. There is no limit to the number of telling points that he can include in a reply. But he made, I thought, a fundamental error. He insisted on scoring heavily off everyone who asked anything approaching a hostile question. Electors, I thought, soon began to be afraid of asking him questions—which is only a a good thing in the case of the professional heckler, who, of course, is the least likely to be frightened off. After a series of scintillating replies, a fresh and interesting question was asked. Instead of replying by a counter-attack, my friend stopped, considered, explained that he was not sure of the answer, then thought aloud and finally produced what was in my view, the correct reply. The whole atmosphere of the meeting changed. He won by his hesitating, thoughtful answer, as many supporters as he had alienated by his former dialectical brilliance.

* * *

After a meeting the other night at which I spoke with Captain Field, Labour candidate in Hampstead, a storm of questions arose, most of them on one subject. Ex-Service men wanted to know where they could live in Hampstead. Their cry was that they could find no accommodation except from aliens who wanted exorbitant rents for a couple of rooms. Some of these questions were propagandist; it was easy to point out, for instance, that the same outrageous prices were being asked for the same inadequate accommodation by British-born citizens in Hampstead. But the problem of housing, acute enough everywhere, must have unusually grave repercussions in a place where there is a concentration of refugees. I thought Captain Field dealt with the problem admirably. He pointed out that the evil was the shortage of houses which could not be remedied by Mr. Willink's naive proposal to aid people in building. People needed houses at reasonable rents, which can only be produced by a great Government building programme. He added that rent restriction should be applied to all rooms, furnished and unfurnished, let by British and foreigners alike, and finally, that he believed that most of the refugees were anxious to return to their own country as soon as possible. He thought that the Government should make it possible for them to do so, both by facilitating their departure and by setting up an administration in Germany under which they could live. Some groups of refugees, Norwegians for instance, have already left this country *en masse*. But there is no real answer to the problem in Hampstead or anywhere else, except a huge and swift building programme.

* * *

A correspondent who thinks that Buchenwald cannot really have been worse than a prison camp in India writes to protest against what he assumed to be impossible and ludicious exaggerations in Mr. Crossman's article in this journal a fortnight ago. How is one to begin to get over the realities of Nazidom to such naive and kindly British souls? They are, of course, quite right in emphasising that there is nothing "different" in German human nature and that the cruelties that have been practiced in Germany could occur in almost any country in certain circumstances. But, except during the late Roman Empire, I know no parallel to the *madness* of Nazi cruelty. I myself have questioned an American officer who had spent weeks on the spot making a full report on Buchenwald. One grotesque detail he gave which was not in Mr. Crossman's article. There is within sight of a large part of the Buchenwald camp a large garden. One of the punishments given was so many hours' work in the garden, within sight of the inmates of the camp, who were often drawn up to witness punishments. The peculiarity of this punishment was that the victim had to do some pleasant-sounding job like planting flowers or moving earth in a wheelbarrow, but to do it at a fast run with an S.S. man flogging him with a whip every time he stumbled. Many men have died within sight of their comrades while planting flowers. Perhaps this story will begin to convey the truth to my correspondent and other sceptics. In every country there are people who have sadistic imaginations. In normal societies, no one except perhaps a psychoanalyst knows about their fantasies; where a pervert tries to translate them into action he usually ends up in a criminal lunatic asylum. The difference in Nazi Germany is that people with such imaginations were deliberately chosen to run prison camps; delighting to wring the last drop of suffering, and, from their point of view, humour, out of the contrast between flowers and death, out of the juxta-position of the cinema, the brothel, the whipping block, and the gallows, they were given absolute power over many thousands of human beings.

* * *

This week the London Poles appointed four new generals, which brings the total of Polish generals now in this country to about 90! They have 900 officers in their headquarters, and a skeleton staff based on the needs of an army of six million men. Apart from released prisoners, the actual Polish army outside Poland is about 200,000. In addition to the huge sum spent on their military establishment, they have received from this country about £18,000,000 a year for their civil administration. So far from intending to wind up now that the German war is over and a new government is being set up in Poland, they plan to maintain as far as possible their emigré administration and army, and do not disguise their hope that before very long they will be fighting, with Western allies, against the Soviet Union. Some of their soldiers say that the Poles did not die at Monte Cassino in order to maintain a huge civilian bureaucracy overseas, or to make Poland safe for another war which must destroy it. But if the London Poles get their way, the men who feel like this will get no chance of expressing their views, and no chance of accepting service under the Warsaw Government. The plan is to maintain the Polish military units on a nominally voluntary basis with Polish officers under the British Command. Individual Polish soldiers would not be given any opportunity of transferring their allegiance to the new Polish Government.

* * *

My suggestion that the intact Ford works outside Cologne were spared deliberately by Allied air forces is questioned by a correspondent, who writes that the Intelligence Officer of a U.S. Air Force station assures him that several missions were given this target, though each was unsuccessful. To my list of odd coincidences I might, however, have added that, not only were the huge I.G. Farben works at Höchst never bombed, but the I.G. Farben offices still tower unscathed over the ruins of Frankfurt and now serve as General Eisenhower's headquarters. Frankfurt was systematically bombed for three years, and the I.G.s' headquarters, which were vital to Germany's war organisation, would seem to have been a central military target. I am asked whether this is a reflection of international cartel policy, whose influence might also be detected by cynics in the selection by Military Government of "reliable" English-speaking I.G. officials (with too little regard to their Third Reich records) to man the local administration of Frankfurt.

* * *

I think of Peter Chalmers Mitchell with immense affection. I recall him not as a remarkable scientist or even as the creator of the modern London Zoo. To me he is the man who had a home in Malaga, who saw the miseries inflicted by Franco, barely escaped with his own life, and insisted on describing what he saw; the man who delighted in saying outrageous and caustic things to his Tory friends in a voice that was infinitely gentle, and with a smile that was angelically benign. They squirmed a bit, but continued to love him, laughing off his criticisms of themselves by saying that it was only Peter's whimsical way. At heart I think he was an anarchist, though characteristically he combined anarchism with whole-hearted and uncritical admiration for Stalin. By temperament he was a Don Quixote; it was like him to have two street accidents and to end his life trying to knock over a taxi-cab. Perhaps, as a friend remarked, he thought the taxi was a falange.

* * *

The *Manchester Guardian* must be congratulated on one of the greatest newspaper achievements in history. Its leading article on Tuesday, entitled "The Red Letter," was reproduced in full on the front page of the *Daily Herald*, and in part on the leader page of the *News Chronicle* on the day after its appearance. I can think of no other case of a newspaper achieving a three million circulation for its leading article outside its own readership.

* * *

Some day I should like to edit an anthology of strange prayers. There is the famous prayer that began: "Doubtless, O Lord, thou hast seen it reported in to-day's *Manchester Guardian* . . ." There is the case of the Scottish Minister who, with Queen Victoria in his congregation, exhorted Her Majesty "to go forth like a he-goat upon the mountains." The latest addition to my collection comes from a reader who, on Sunday last, heard the Vicar at his Parish Church pray for

> those who are in any way afflicted or distressed in mind, body or estate—especially those who will give their votes this week . . .

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to R.C.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Six Labour Aldermen and Councillors of Altrincham, Cheshire, last night expressed disapproval that permission had been given to Sir Edward Grigg, eleven years M.P. for Altrincham, to take the title Lord Altrincham . . . . The Mayor . . . . put the matter to the Sewage Disposal Committee, who granted Sir Edward's request by five votes to three . . . . *Daily Mail.*

Mr. Stanley Holmes, Simonite candidate at Jarrow, sent this telegram to Mr. Churchill yesterday: "Tyneside would like to touch the hem of your garment on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of next week."—*News Chronicle.*

At Dunchurch the villagers had transformed the statue of Lord John Douglas Scott into a passing resemblance of the Prime Minister himself by means of an imitation cigar of wood fastened to the mouth, a blue reefer jacket across the shoulders and a white sailor's hat.—*Evening News.*

Westbury (Wilts) Urban District Council have entered into an agreement with a brewery that a part of licensed premises should be rented as a public mortuary until required as a skittle alley.—*Daily Mirror.*

TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR CYCLE

OPINION polls conducted on a national scale in the United States, Canada, Australia and Great Britain, all show very strong minorities of the public saying they expect another war within the next 25 years. In none of these countries are as many as half the people prepared to say definitely that they *don't* expect another war in this period; in all of them over a third say that they *do.*

The National Opinion Research Centre, University of Denver (NORC), asked a cross-section of Americans whether they expected the United States to fight in another war during the next fifty years. Thirty-six per cent. said they expected the next war within twenty-five years; a further twenty-three per cent. expected it within fifty years. These attitudes are pretty stable. The total of fifty-nine per cent. thinking there would be war within the next half-century was identical in 1944 and 1945. An alternative approach (NORC), asking people to choose which of a range of four ideas about war came nearest their own, showed over a half saying either that wars are inevitable, or that people will never do what is necessary to prevent them. About two-fifths thought that wars would be prevented one day, but of these seventeen per cent. thought this war would not be the last one, and only twenty-six per cent. voted for the proposition "After this war, it is likely that a way will be worked out to prevent any more wars."

In this country, the assumption that World World III is on its inevitable way is continually cropping up, blurring the horizon of hope and initiative. The British Institute of Public Opinion gets a considerably higher proportion (nearly a half) of the public expecting war within 25 years than does Gallup in America, or the Gallup affiliates in Australia and Canada. A localised Mass-Observation sample, asked a similar question but without the twenty-five year time-limit, produced similar results. Those who were able to express any opinion about when they expected the next war overwhelmingly favoured an interval of twenty-five years or less.

The twenty-five-year cycle is firmly established in many peoples' minds to-day *as the expected thing*, a sort of catch-phrase for sceptical comment. Ask people how long they think it will be before some proposed social legislation is put into practice and someone is almost certain to say, "In time for the next war." Asked what he thought should be done to Germany after the war, one man said: "Oh, we'll finance it and supply it with everything needed to make world war number three, you see if I'm not right." And a woman, asked what she thought things would be like after the war, said she thought they'd take about twenty-five years to straighten out—"in time for the next war." Overheard on V-E Day in Trafalgar Square, a young woman complaining of her feet to her man friend, encouraged by him with "Come on, grin and bear it. You only get a celebration of this sort once every twenty-five years."

All sorts of subsidiary scepticisms fit into the framework of the twenty-five-year cycle—expectation of unemployment, the hiatus between what people *hope* will be done in the post-war period and what they *expect* to be done. This was demonstrated in Mass-Observation's *The Journey Home* (Murray, 1944). A more recent example comes from America. NORC asked a national cross-section to choose which of three alternative ways of running a world organisation came nearest what they would like, and what they expected. Top expectation was lowest hope. ("Britain, Russia and the United States together to have most say in running it"—expected by forty-nine per cent., hoped for by nineteen per cent.) And the top hope—"All countries in the organisation to have about the same amount of say about running it"—was what forty-three per cent. said they would like, but was expected by only seventeen per cent.

How deep does contemporary scepticism about the future go? It has been discussed a good deal recently in relation to the birthrate. The tendency has been to minimise the importance of the cannon-fodder argument against bringing children into the world. Dr. Eliot Slater* says, on the basis of actual family case-studies:

> Correspondents to newspapers have suggested that "of course" it (the declining birthrate) is because of the unsettled state of the world. No sensible parent would wish to bring a child into a world where all that he can hope for is to become a soldier, or to live in an air-raid shelter. From the information I have, this does not seem to be a motive for family restriction which has much force with ordinary people. . . .

On the list of reasons given for excessive restriction by the families investigated, "World affairs are so terrible nowadays; this is no world for children" comes eleventh out of twelve.

It is true that, if you ask people why they don't want more children, very few say it is because of the state of the world or fear of the future. It is equally true that, if you ask them directly whether or not they think they would want more children if they could be sure of the future, a large proportion say "yes." But either approach is very superficial. By correlating married women's verbal attitude to the post-war future with their ideas about the family-size they want, Mass-Observation finds that the pessimists do in fact say they want smaller families than the optimists—despite the fact that very few mention such fears in response to direct questioning. More work needs to be done along these lines, but there are sufficient indications to suggest that outlooks are affected by lack of faith in the future, a good deal more deeply than people themselves fully realise.

In a typical London suburb to-day, in response to the question "Do you believe there is a God or there isn't, or haven't you made up your mind," only a little over a half of the men and three-quarters of the women are prepared to say definitely that they think there is, and there are twice as many non-believers and doubters among the young as among the old. Only two-fifths of those who say there is a God say they believe definitely in life after death.

Better physical amenities, improved social services, wider educational opportunities, desirable though they are, may amount to little more than a veneer overlaying these fundamental insecurities if some broader faith and focus is not found as well. "To the surprise of the Humanists and Liberal Churchmen," says Aldous Huxley, "the abolition of God left a perceptible void. But Nature abhors vacuums." We need not agree that the potential vacuum-fillers are essentially *ersatz*. We must admit the vacuum and the need. Something will doubtless come to replace these dwindling faiths. Meantime, the less people believe in the old the more uncritically susceptible are they likely to become to the new. The need for something to believe in is acute to-day. The drift of war has been essentially a drift *away*; away from the established institution and the established creed rooted in the anxious past. Politically, the undoubted Leftward swing is essentially a swing *away* from old beliefs, not yet clearly or enthusiastically directed towards a new source. If a Labour majority is returned in this election, many of its supporters will be very liable to be very easily disappointed in its performance, because fundamentally they *expect* disappointment and are on the look-out for it. Unless there is some tangible, unmistakable evidence that the old pattern *is* changing soon, the search for a faith may well lead people into strange new fields.

H. D. WILLCOCK

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* *Rebuilding Family Life in the Post-war World*, Ed. Sir James Marchant. Odhams Press, June 1945, 2s.

ORDERS IS ORDERS

TO-DAY I went shopping—or rather, foraging round the farms for eggs and vegetables. In many farms they hide their eggs in the oddest places, in fear of the Russians or Poles. But as soon as they see it is an Englishman—and that particularly mad one who's been there before—they rout in the washing basket and the water cistern and behind the family bike, and when asked the price of twenty eggs, reply hesitantly—as if afraid it may be too much—two marks (the equivalent of a shilling!) In one farm I go to, there are five children. The mother is very clean, and her face shines from scrubbing. Her husband is *gefallen* (Oh, how that phrase drums in my brain, repeating itself like a gramophone record that won't stop. "*Mein Mann ist gefallen*"—over and over again; all over Europe and America and through Asia to Japan; hundreds of thousands of weed-clad women chanting a monotonous dirge—"*Mein Mann ist gefallen*"). Everything about the farm is bright and shining with cleanliness. The widow has to do everything herself. She tells me she has no time to think about the future, or the past. Politics? She hasn't been out of the farm for years; has only the vaguest idea of what is happening. A fellow countrywoman of Heinrich Himmler—that, I suppose is her cardinal sin.

This morning it was decided that as we may be here indefinitely, it is only right that our men, instead of living in uncomfortable active-service campaigning bivouacs, should move into proper billets. This is true. It's not good for prestige—or the men, for that matter. Most of them have fought all the way from the beaches, and having won the war are entitled to all the comfort they can get. There is, we are told, a row of houses down there; go and take them; tell the people to clear out. They did it all over France and Belgium.

Being able to speak German, I land the job—knowing from experience that I'm not going to like it; that, however, is beside the point. I drink half a bottle of hock with my lunch, then collect an armed escort and set out. They stop at the first house. Bang, bang on the door. Frightened faces appear at the windows; old, alarmed, terrified faces (Himmler's body lies a-mouldering in the wood, but his soul goes marching on). With much unlocking and rattling, the door is eventually opened. The man of the house is summoned (unless he's *gefallen*); always an old man. Then the inevitable question, "Are you all Germans in the house?" They are. Then, "*Die Truppen müssen dieses Haus haben.*" They have until to-morrow morning to get themselves and their furniture out. The performance is repeated all along the road. Appeals for more time, questions about what are they to do, tears and hysterics, have no effect on the stony-hearted officer. This is an order. What they do is their own affair. The Military must have the houses.

Some of them take it very well. The old man with the beard, for instance. This is the fourth time he's been moved out of a house for the troops. He keeps his bags packed in readiness. He has come to accept a fatalist philosophy. He has a pig which he keeps in the garden. We debate whether it would be better for him to take the pig or come daily and feed it. He says wistfully he supposes he couldn't stay on and live in the cellar. I reply, No—no one is to stay. *Es ist ein Befehl.* He brightens up again. Oh, yes—an order is an order. He agrees very happily; and adds, most logically, that a war is a war, and a house is a house.

Then there is Granny. I'm quite sure she is a great nuisance to her relatives. She dances about with glee, calling "The troops are coming!"

and darts in and out among the rest of the family, her old daft face popping out from time to time to shrill delightedly, "We've got to be out by morning!" I know that when they had packed up all her things for her, she suddenly decided she wanted something she had seen most carefully packed at the bottom of her trunk. In another house there is Uncle Ernst. He is a fat old man, like a Frank Reynolds' cartoon of a Hun. He was lying on his back on a settee. Either he was having a Sunday afternoon nap, or else he was dead. I couldn't find out, because whatever I asked his relatives, they merely replied with great pride—"That's Uncle Ernst." Personally, I incline to the belief that he was dead. But it wasn't all so funny. There was the woman with three children—one of them a year old. She lived alone; her husband, by way of variation, was not *gefallen*, but a prisoner in the hands of the Russians. She said, "But I can't be out by eight o'clock to-morrow morning. I've got three children to get up." This seemed reasonable.

Later in the afternoon, I went down to see everything was under control. There they were—horse-drawn carts and hand-trucks outside every house. Men and women bringing out tables, chairs, beds, suitcases and piling them on. I stood and watched, and thought about streets in Belgium, Holland, France; about Concentration Camps and atrocities; about the Pole who came to see me, with the top of his finger sawn off by the S.S.; about a story I heard of German civilians hooting with laughter when two Russians (or maybe Poles) were hanged outside a prison camp. I thought of all this, but it still didn't make any sense. If I could have got Kramer, and resurrected Himmler and Hitler himself, with Göring, Streicher, and Von Bohle of the Berlin Pressamt, and turned them personally out of their houses—then yes. That might have been a good thing to do. But I couldn't see that because the mass of Germans had been unaware (and, incidentally, pretty helpless), and a minority had demonstrated the worst side of human nature exaggerated *ad infinitum*, that anything was being gained by scaring the wits out of a collection of old men and women, girls, boys and children. However: *ein Befehl.*

I answered questions about odd little domestic problems which kept cropping up. Many people kept pigs and hens in their back gardens. We decided it was best for them to take the pigs (show one of our men a pig, and he'll produce a cured ham in twelve hours). Then there were the vegetables: it was obviously reasonable to say that they could come and get the produce from their gardens; they have, strangely enough, to live. So there I stood, making little jokes to the Sergeant about how I would from henceforth be known as the Beast of ——. I'm not saying for a moment that it's not right and proper that our troops should live under a roof. Of course they should. I think too, perhaps, that the Germans should be made to realise that they must accept some responsibility for Hitler and Co., instead of being even more anti-Nazi in their sentiments, as they are at present, than the average British Tommy. But are these the right methods?

Funnily enough, I went home to find a man from Belsen there. A Jew; an intellectual; an intelligent man. He said, "After a time, you cease to feel bitter because you feel it impossible to believe that these Germans could have sunk to such depths of bestiality as to do the things I know they did—because I have seen it with my own eyes. The women warders were worse than the men. But while the S.S. troops were understandably beaten up by the British, the Tommies, because of their conditioning, did not touch the women."

I said, "But you *do* feel bitter, don't you?" He had every reason for it. He told me things which one would find incredible in a Krafft Ebing of diabolism. I listened, and I tried very hard, but still couldn't hate the whole German nation. All the kids and old men in our street. I found old things recurring through my mind—the fact that Bach used to sing in the choir at Luneberg church; and that uproarously irrelevant line of Schiller's—"*Alle Menschen werden Bruder*," with Beethoven's strings and trumpets, pizzicattoing away in another age and another world. Yet if anyone could make me sign on the dotted line for the All-Germans-are-bastards school, it's that Jew. But I can't. Like some others, I'm the half-witted boy who still believes that the moon is made of green cheese, and that the Germany of Bach and Ehrlich and Koch, and of that old anthroposophical versifier Wolfgang Goethe, is as important as the Reichs created by Frederick the Great, Will Hohenzollern and the Hitler troops.

SUBALTERN

COMEDIE FRANCAISE

THE actors of the Comédie Française opened their three weeks' visit to London last Monday at the New Theatre with Molière's *L'Impromptu de Versailles* and Beaumarchais's *Le Barbier de Seville.* They will play also in rotation Victor Hugo's *Ruy Blas, Phèdre* and *Tartuffe.* It is an opportunity not to be missed even by playgoers like myself, who understand French far better through the eye than the ear. We can, however, remedy to a great extent such deficiencies by reading the plays beforehand, and thus enjoy far more their interpretation by a company, not only always remarkable for individual talent, but for embodying in its performances traditions created by great actors and actresses in the past. The Comédie Française is part of a civilisation we fought to preserve and which we may hope will survive. We cannot serve the future better than by understanding better the genius of France.

Not knowing that *L'Impromptu de Versailles* would precede *Le Barbier de Seville*, I had not read it beforehand, and consequently I often failed to follow. I have remedied that omission now, but as you can imagine, I cannot rely upon remembering exactly how certain passages were spoken when I did not understand what was being said at the time. Moreover it is a play in which, unlike *The Barber of Seville*, the situations do not infallibly supply clues to the dialogue. Therefore please only take for what it is worth my general impression that, in spite of the vigorous acting of M. Pierre Dux in the part of Molière himself, the performance as a whole seemed to lack the high finish we expect at the Comédie Française. True, I may have been misled by the play itself being a hurried rehearsal of one, in which the actors have consequently often to pretend *not* to be acting, but there is a subtle art in doing this on the stage which I fancied was sometimes lacking, while the performance as a whole (remember it was the actors' first, here) did not strike me as beautifully pulled together.

The *Impromptu* was Molière's retort to his rivals the comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne company, and to his enemy Boursault; also his answer to all the affected fashionable women, and ridiculous marquises whom he had ridiculed in his comedies and who had complained of his insolence. In fact it was his retort to all his enemies except the dévots. Their turn was to come. There is a line in *L'Impromptu*, "tout ce qu'il a touché jusqu'ici n'est rien que bagatelle au prix de ce qui resté," which foreshadows *Tartuffe.* This little masterpiece of downright common sense and irony delighted Louis XIV, and it reveals not only Molière's combative professional life but his temperament, more directly perhaps than anything else he wrote. The form, a rehearsal of a play, was a startling invention.

When the curtain went up on *The Barber of Seville* (1775) and we saw an elegant Spaniard in a black cloak restlessly prowling beneath the barred window of his lady, we were transported into the more familiar world of romantic artificial comedy. (Mme. Suzanne Lalique's décor was admirable throughout.) And now, being familiar with the play, I could appreciate the skill with which M. Dux interpreted the joyous duplicity and *sensitive toughness* of the immortal Figaro (in this play a barber and, as the custom was, half a doctor, too); the elegance and gay agility of M. Jean Desailly's Count Almaviva; the grumpy, flustered, suspicious old Bartholo (admirably played by M. Louis Seigner), and the superbly seedy, dismal rascal, Bazile (M. Jean Meyer was perfect). There is only one woman's part, Rosine, old Bartholo's unfortunate ward whom he means to marry, and who has lost her heart to the young elegant wooer beneath her window without knowing his distinction. The theme is a primitive one (none the worse for that), a favourite with the *Commedia del Arte;* youth and love successfully deceiving old age and authority, to which, however, Beaumarchais added a new flavour by mingling Spanish setting with Parisian wit and eighteenth-century cynicism. Rosine is a mixture of innocence and sophistication, tenderness and malice *une fine mouche*, and old Bartholo is by no means the easy dupe of traditional comedy but shrewd and hard to deceive, inspired, as Rosine says, with, "*l'instinct de la jalousie*," and, this makes the comedy exciting. He is a wily opponent of young love. Mlle. Dalmes was a subtle and delicious Rosine, but she lacked that sparkle of vivid vitality which the part requires.

The dialogue glitters with the wit of the spoken word, spontaneous epigrams and rapid tirades. All the characters are master talkers, even the glum Bazile. Yet the wit never overflows the boundaries of the situation. The action is swift, full of suspense. The interest depends not as in Molière on the situations revealing depths of character, or on the dialogue conveying shades of sentiment as in the comedies of Marivaux, but in the adroitness and wit with which the characters continually adapt themselves to circumstance. *Le Barbier de Seville* is one of the most exhilarating of the world's comedies, and these actors understand to a nicety the spirit of it.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

NOTES ON SHOWS

NEW exhibitions continue to proliferate to the embarrassment as well as the delight of the critic whose increased needs are not heeded by the paper controller. I take refuge therefore in jottings.

Slatter Gallery, 30, Old Bond Street, Dutch 17th century pictures in aid of Help Holland Fund. Sir Alfred Beit's Vermeer: a shaft of light on woman writing letter, the "showiest" Vermeer I have seen, wonderful and just not too clever. The other Star, a Rembrandt Rabbi, lent by the Duke of Devonshire; particularly fine pictures by Jan Stein and Maes, also good examples of Metsu, de Hooch and Ruysdael,

"The Age of Grace" at Roland, Browse and Delbanco in Cork Street (could they not find a less cumbrous name?). Eighteenth century French paintings and drawings. A Watteau, small, unfinished, crackled and enlivened only by faint nuances of colour, yet consummately beautiful and suggestive, the equivalent in paint of *Dove sono* or Nashe's "Dust hath closed Helen's eye." Then a famous Reynolds of Kitty Fisher, far beyond his usual scope, and the noble Gainsborough from the Courtauld Institute. Also interesting early Gainsborough landscape and Daniel Gardner portrait. On second floor, two specially brilliant Sickerts; and landscape by Pasmore as delicious as strawberries and cream or Boucher girls.

Art of Primitive Peoples at Berkeley Gallery, sculpture from Africa and Oceania, various in quality. A few pieces masterly in form, and at once refined and violent. Horror and sometimes humour, hardly ever happiness, and one feels this lack is what chiefly makes them inferior to best Greek, mediaeval and Renaissance sculpture.

Bomford Collection of French pictures shown by Arts Council at R.W.S. Galleries in Conduit Street. Older pictures disappointing, except for Sebastien Bourdon. Fine Degas, Renoir, Ribot, Bonnard, Modigliani. Show includes two pictures attributed to Manet, which filled the correspondence columns of *The Times* with wails from self-styled experts. A storm in an egg-cup. Very close to Manet if not by him, the works could mislead no one about general character of this painter. Attribution therefore unimportant except in sale room. The very thoughtful composition of the landscape makes me doubt Manet; I suspect a painter who had profited from Cézanne or who was naturally more gifted than Manet for design. The Still Life very like Manet both in virtues and defects. Remembering disputes about authorship of some famous Italian Old Masters, one is amazed at the brouhaha about these pictures.

Wildenstein's: Four contemporary painters, three sculptors—charm, sensibility, but no fire. Henry Carr, a finely painted nude; Adrian Daintrey, good colour arrangements found in Cairo streets; Carel Weight, a painter to watch; Eve Disher, charming and personal talent, still too little appreciated; Dobson's statuette *Marine*, one of his best things; Karin Jonzen, very pleasant but rather anonymous; Barbara Taylor stylises, as I think, tiresomely.

Two large and exhausting summer exhibitions, Redfern Gallery and Royal Academy. Pictures better at former, larger at latter. Notice in the Redfern miscellany Whistler, Sickert, William Nicholson, Duncan Grant, Ivon Hitchens, Eleanor Bellingham-Smith, and a very haunting Bérard. At Burlington House Le Bas and Moynihan head and shoulders above rest of crowd. Sir Gerald Kelly's State portraits of their Majesties have been unfairly abused. Use of same background at slightly different angles makes the pictures a most incompatible pair—a very odd and rudimentary mistake to be made by a painter like Sir Gerald who has looked thoughtfully at many pictures. The Queen looks blue with cold, the King—most uncharacteristically—has something of a coxcomb. But look at neighbouring portraits by Gunn, Birley, Jagger—imagine State portraits painted in any such styles, and thank God for Sir Gerald.

During the bombings several artists were elected Associates, and there was talk of a continuing infiltration. But at the next A.R.A. election I think the senior members will present a formidable array. Latest betting from the course: Gunn, evens; Devas, 4–1; Gowing, 8–1; Henry Carr and John Armstrong, 12–1; Hillier, 16–1; 20–1 the field (some entries not confirmed).

ROGER MARVELL

RADIO NOTES

> "It is a curious fact that while those in authority consider it quite right and proper, and indeed inevitable, for a Russian or Norwegian to make use of his own native tunes, directly an Englishman does the same with his tunes, the finger of scorn is pointed at him and he is called 'folky.'"

Thus Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, defending his chosen idiom in the *Radio Times*. With all the respect due to so great an authority, I believe this sentence mis-states the point at issue. What many musicians object to in the symphonic use of English folk tunes is—as Constant Lambert has pointed out—the attempt to fit into a symphonic framework melodies which are neither elastic enough in form, nor definite enough in the shape of their units, to lend themselves to that kind of adaptation. The Russians and Norwegians, on the other hand, are the fortunate inheritors of a quantity of melodies composed of units which are characteristic in themselves and yet are "open at both ends" (in Tovey's phrase), as most English folk tunes are not; so that it is an obvious procedure to use them as symphonic material. At the same time, there are certain features of English folk melody, such as the pentatonic scale and six-eight measure, which are regularly employed by composers like Delius and Vaughan Williams himself, and are not open to the same objections. Apart from these definite characteristics there is a certain "atmosphere" disengaged by almost all English music—a combination of emotional naivety, mild idealism, and simple romance—which undoubtedly derives in part from folk-song origins. Our music is that of a good-natured people; what, in this sense, could be more thoroughly and obviously English than, for instance, the *Andante piacevole* of Elgar's String Quartet, or the *pastorale* at the beginning of the Cello Concerto? The folk-tune element is latent in both, but has been completely digested by a modern idiom; we have none of that sense of "archaising" which makes a good deal of contemporary English music sound mannered and provincial.

Those who heard Casals play the Elgar concerto last week must, I think, have wondered why this superb work is not more popular than it is. The great cellist fulfilled all our memories of him; his technique seemed as flawless as ever, and in the glorious epilogue of the concerto he brought tears to our eyes. It was like an elegy for Humanity—a profoundly felt meditation on the tragedy which has visited our world (and his) since Casals was last with us. I shall add this experience to the very few with which I intend to bore my grandchildren. Considering that the concert took place in the Albert Hall, the balance of orchestra and soloist in the broadcast was better than might have been expected. I can think of no other living player who would dare to deliver a slow, lyrical theme with such exquisite, sympathetic intimacy, in a hall of that size. The Schumann Cello Concerto is rather a stale sandwich, but the jam, though small in quantity, is of most delicious quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*July* 8. Fauré: *Requiem* (2.30); "Yes and Back Again" (Walter de la Mare, 3.30); Fauré: Songs and Piano Solos (9.30).

July 9. Scriabin: The Divine Poem (G.F.P. 5.50).

July 10. "The Silver Mask" (8.25); The Future of Domestic Service (9.15).

July 12. "War in the Pacific" 1. (8.0); Fauré (piano and orchestra 10.30).

July 13. Woman's Page (Mme. Massigli, Earl Spencer and Mary Ferguson 6.30); Symphony Concert (10.0).

July 14. "The Friendly Foe" (Mary Coleridge, 3.30); "The Voice of France" (7.0).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"Our Country," at the Academy

"Henry V," at the Marble Arch Pavilion

An interesting point has been raised by Miss Dilys Powell in her review of *Our Country*: how far poetry can be effective on the screen. There is no cut-and-dried answer; it works or it doesn't work according to circumstance; but the chances, I should say, are against. Some poetry—Whitman's, for example—would seem to lend itself well enough, while only a maniac would try to wed Keats or Baudelaire to the photograph. The more packed and evocative the poem, the smaller the chance of adaptation. One can't, as a physical fact, pay attention to images thrown on a screen and enjoy the interior illumination of poetry at the same time. The borderline product of verse and prose, of rhetoric and poetry, would seem to have most likelihood of success. The words, as in oratorio, should be easily taken in, should be repeated, should indicate rather than express. Such were the semi-poetic commentaries of *The River* (a MacLeish-like incantation) and of *Night Mail*, in which Auden's lyrical passages seized upon insistent rhythms in the film. In the case of *Our Country* Mr. Dylan Thomas has written a free and rhapsodical poem, relying largely on catalogue, but still I couldn't—and I don't believe Miss Powell could—take in both vision and word together. The result was a film beautiful to look at and possibly also to listen to, if one had been able to manage both.

With a dearth of new films, and the problem of poetry and film in mind, I paid a second long-delayed visit to *Henry V*. This production does magnificently by its verse, hardly a line of which misses on the screen, from the kingly diatribes to the common clowning. How has it been done, for the eye also, it must be admitted, is pretty effectively engaged? Well, by a variety of means. Where the verse is boring (as it sometimes is, especially at the beginning) the actors distract us with more "business" than the stage would allow; where it soars the camera becomes motionless, or pans slowly towards or away, holding a single shot for six times the usual length. One of the most effective passages in the film is the long close-up of Olivier during an unspoken meditation on the eve of battle; nothing moves on the screen, which is two-thirds dark, except the eyes. The whole film is rich in such devices and in settings on which the eye can pasture at ease; but it is done at a cost. Despite many admirable qualities, the effect is to slow down Shakespeare, or to seem to slow him down, which is the same thing. Olivier's *Henry V* remains a brilliant *tour-de-force*, which I would gladly, I may say, visit yet again. Its finest sequences—the battle scenes—contain not one spoken word: strange achievement with a Shakespeare play. If there is a moral to be drawn here, it is that, while Shakespeare may inspire a director with one of his least poetic plays, Shakespearean poetry remains intractable material for the screen.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

FRANCE, BRITAIN AND SYRIA

SIR,—Your correspondent, "British Officer in Palestine," seems more interested in composing a thesis on British Macchiavellianism than in historical truth. He seems to have, indeed, been completely converted to the legend of the "Perfide Albion"; he takes only the French point of view and sees British machinations against France in the Levant from 1918 until 1945. In so doing he forgets, however, that before and after the last war, Britain came to two agreements with France, namely, the Sykes-Picot and the San-Remo agreements, by which Britain accorded to France a sphere of influence and a mandate over Syria and the Lebanon. His allegations, consequently, about connivance at Yassin Pasha's staff plan for action against France and the supply of money and arms—this one borrowed from a French author—to be used against the French, are simply a partisan absurdity unsupported by any evidence.

"British Officer's" cardinal error lies, however, in entirely ignoring Arab nationalism which dates from before Britain or France had ever set foot in the Levant. The Arabs had allied themselves with the British, revolted against and fought the Turks over whom victory was won through the Arabs' "invaluable help" (according to Lord Allenby's testimony), so that they might reach the independence they had been yearning for—not in order to see their country dismembered, ruled and exploited by the French. In their unequal battle they lost much and achieved little, but will never give up the struggle.

The difference between the British and French attitude in this respect is that whereas the British saw the possibility of co-operation with the Arabs, the French consistently fought them by force of arms, blind as they were to the rising and inevitable tide of Arab nationalism and inspired with the same spirit prevailing in Madagascar and Indo-China. The best example of France's undisguised colonial action is Gouraud's ultimatum to King Faisul in 1920 and his subsequent battle against the Arabs in spite of Faisul's acceptance of his conditions. No more wicked distortion of history could have been better achieved than "British Officer's" calling this episode "Anglo-Arab combination" and "Faisul's coup d'état."

When speaking of an eventual alliance between France and the Levant States, "British Officer" proceeds to give, by all moral standards, a hitherto unknown definition of the term alliance: "The real function of alliance . . . under modern conditions implies the right of the foreign ally to maintain forces and occupy bases." Further on, he goes on to say that from the imperialist point of view it is not sound policy to jockey the French out of Syria. Really "British Officer's" views on international relations make Nazi Germany's and dictatorial Hungary's treatment of Rumania pale into insignificance. His reference to the Arab League as a "successful promotion of the Cairo Residency" shows fanatic ignorance of and prejudice against the age-old Arab nationalism.

It should be noted in this respect, that the Arab League, which was based on and proposes to follow the generally-accepted principles of regional collaboration, fostered and sanctioned in the San Francisco Conference, has raised no objection in any quarter as it is directed against nobody, but, on the contrary, promises to be of real help and contribution to the World Organisation. Such general acceptance of its existence and principles was, however, tarnished by one exception: the objection of Zionists, who see in it an obstacle to their plans of pervading Palestine and the Arab Middle East with their capitalistic exploits against the interests, culture and aspirations of the Arabs. And the unavoidable conclusion one draws from the reading of "British Officer's" letter is not only, as he unconsciously but adequately describes himself as "British Officer in Palestine, 1918–1920," that he is labouring under the mentality prevailing in those far-off years, or as a diehard believer in *machtpolitik*, but that his whole tone smacks of Zionist thinking which in addition to being anti-Arab, is also anti-British.

ANWAR NASHASHIBI

Arab Office, S.W.1.

FOREIGN POLICY

r,—The Tory plea for " continuity of foreign y "—which to the ordinary anti-Fascist citizen s staggering in its effrontery—reveals the nt of the sacrifices made by the Left to preserve tional unity."

hat emerges from behind the veil of secrecy in h our wartime diplomacy has been shrouded is we have not one foreign policy but two. The epancy between the policy which was sold to ate House of Commons and the public, and the one h is actually being pursued behind the scenes, now become so glaring that no intelligent person plead ignorance of it. The cause of the dis- ancy is not really in any serious doubt: it is control exercised over the Foreign Office by the ty." There is nothing new in this situation. Foreign Office has always been the servant of Money Power and has always framed its policies ccordance with what the financial world under- ds by " British interests," regardless of public ion. As a result, we have been involved in two d wars in a quarter of a century and—unless iament at last asserts itself to defend the people's ts—we may shortly be involved in a third.

a moment of candour the late Neville Chamber- admitted that " Non-Intervention " was due to fact that the City had " £40 million invested ranco territory." All the ballyhoo about Bolshevism " Christianity," was claptrap, to delude the House Commons and the public. Similar claptrap has talked by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Anthony about our recent crusades to save Greece from ndits " and defend the " independence " of a and Lebanon. No one of any intelligence or e of decency believes a word of it.

t San Francisco, M. Paul-Boncour asked for a ral fact-finding commission to be set up, to ire into the situation in the Levant. No request d have been more reasonable; but the reply of Stettinius was a curt refusal. By inference means that the Anglo-American oil kings do not the real facts to be disclosed. Thus our friend- with our nearest neighbour, which it should be aramount British interest to strengthen and pre- e, has been imperilled by a group of shady financiers military intriguers of whose secret motives we kept in ignorance.

ny reputation for veracity which Foreign Office kesmen may have acquired in the past was blown -high by Mr. R. A. Butler during the Spanish il War, when his replies to questions in the House Commons made us the laughing-stock of Europe America. Since then, no serious student of Foreign Affairs, either in England or abroad, has believed any official statement or Foreign Office " hand-out " unless amply corroborated from outside sources. The most that can be said in excuse of some of the utterances of Messrs. Churchill and Eden is that they were based on false information supplied to them through the " usual channels."

It is these mysterious " channels " that all honest men, who have the slightest regard for the future of their country, should now require to see in the witness box. A Royal Commission of Inquiry should be set up by the new Parliament with power to examine witnesses under oath and to enforce the production of relevant documents. Only in this way will the secret Fascist influences which are endangering the prospects of Peace be revealed and purged. Surely the least we can do for the sons we have lost is to find out who is really responsible for the efforts to sabotage resistance movements and preserve reactionary regimes in the countries they died to liberate.

Whatever may be the composition of the new Parliament, the test of the patriotism, courage and honesty of its members will be their attitude towards the secret diplomacy which menaces our future and has brought on us so many disasters in the past. Only the truth can set our children free.

Douglas Goldring

THE SERVICE VOTER

Sir,—I have been wondering what percentage of the Army overseas has been disfranchised for the coming General Election, or whether the experience of myself and a few close associates has been particularly unfortunate.

Some time last year I filled in a B2626, appointing a proxy to vote on my behalf. Early this year it returned to me from England with the information that, due to it not having been countersigned by the officer responsible for its despatch, it was invalid.

I thereupon filled in another B2626 and handed that in, in the meantime having changed both my unit and my address. To-day I received a letter from my wife informing me that I am not on the local Register of Electors, Service or otherwise. The first card was rendered invalid through the fault of a responsible officer; the second (presumably) because of the alteration in my address.

Three other men in my present unit are also voteless, despite having at one time or another filled in one or more cards in this curiously contorted method of electoral registration. One of the men has received a card from his local Electoral Officer informing him that his application to vote by post was unacceptable and telling him to fill in three different Army Forms (B2626, B2639 and B2645), which would enable him to vote at a General Election on and after October 1st.

I am sorry to have taken up so much of your time with such a wretched screed, but the matter is very galling. After all the " bull " about the numbers of men who had filled in the original form, and all the discussions about the politically unconscious ones who had failed to do so, it is very exasperating or very funny to realise that of all those overseas who did fill them in, perhaps only a small percentage have actually reached the Electoral Register. About nine-tenths of the Army overseas are always on the move, so the part about a change of address rendering application invalid must have had some fascinating results.

Sergeant, P.A.I.C.

SPLIT VOTES

Sir,—" Critic " refers to the Westminster Abbey Division and says " I can see no good reason for Labour retaining a candidate against a Communist " there.

As this is " Critic's " own constituency, I feel I must make these points clear:

(1) It is fantastic to hope for a Communist victory in this old Tory stronghold. It is, however, becoming very clear that Labour can win this time, as the business vote has dwindled and a very large proportion of better-off people are intending to vote Labour.

(2) Abbey has always been fought by Labour.

(3) The Communist Party has never fought Abbey before, and has no local representation whatsoever.

(4) The voters are tired of propaganda fights and want action. We must face realities and forget personalities and realise that only a Labour Party with a majority can act. Any Division that can be won for the Left must be fought for by the Party that can win it. It is unreal, for instance, to believe that a majority of voters in Westminster want a Communist representative.

Jeremy Hutchinson

Westminster Abbey
Divisional Labour Party,
20 Victoria Street, S.W.1.

[" Critic " writes: " I have nothing against Mr. Hutchinson, for whom, as a member of the Labour Party, I shall vote. But I took his candidature as an example of an unnecessary splitting of the anti-Conservative vote. I gather that Mr. Carritt was first in the field. Cases where a Communist candidate came in to split the Labour vote, are, in my view, even more deplorable.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

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JONATHAN CAPE

GREEK AFTERMATH

SIR,—I have read the terrible things which a British soldier, in his letter to his wife published in your last issue, asserts are taking place in Greece.

He makes the very general accusation that most of the goods given to the Greek Government for distribution end up on the black market, and that this is due to the "lack of supervision by U.N.R.R.A. of the Greek authorities, who are thoroughly corrupt." I leave it to you to judge whether it is fair to hurl such vague and serious accusations against a government and against a whole civil service. One need only quote in contradiction the statement made here in London by Mr. W. S. Duthie, Deputy Chief of the U.N.R.R.A. Mission in Greece early this month, who said: "Lack of trucks and deplorable road conditions are at the root of U.N.R.R.A.'s transport problem. Railways are even worse than the roads; it is said that it will take about seven years to repair them." Mr. Duthie also flatly denied any rumours that U.N.R.R.A. flour finds its way to the free market. "Inspectors keep a close check on the movement of food from shipside to consumer," he said. How, then, can the Greek Government or civil service be held responsible if any goods find their way to the black market after having been handed to the consumer?

Your correspondent also embarks on the subject of our national claims. I think that a country of seven millions, which has sacrificed in the struggle for the freedom of mankind over 500,000 lives, all her wealth and her very existence, and which passed four years under the triple oppression of Germans, Bulgars and Italians, is entitled to demand at least what belongs to it ethnologically and what is indispensable for its most elementary security.

I do not know what irresponsible people consider our national claims should be, but in actual fact they are modest and very just. This is how they were formulated to the press on May 13th by the Greek Foreign Secretary, Mr. Sofianopoulos, at San Francisco:

1. The annexation of the Dodecanese Islands.
2. The annexation of northern Epirus. "The attempt made by the Italians and Albanians to change the ethnological character of the population deported and persecuted by force does not deprive Greece of her title to that Greek area."
3. Security from "further Bulgarian invasions through the establishment of her frontier with Bulgaria on a more just basis, as Greece has been the victim of three Bulgarian invasions in the last 25 years."

I do not want to disillusion your correspondent, but he will no doubt be interested to know, in contradiction to what he writes in his letter, that these national claims have been fully sponsored both by the E.A.M. and the Greek Communist Party, as stated in their communique dated June 5th. G. SYRIOTIS

Greek Department of Information.

"GESTAPO"

SIR,—You may be interested to publish the following extract from a letter which I have just received from my husband, who is at present serving with the R.A.F. in India. The letter was written after hearing Mr. Churchill's famous "Gestapo" broadcast speech, and describes the methods employed for eliminating "undesirables" from the armed forces under *our present regime*:—

"An officer of the Provost branch would visit the commanding officer personally and show him a memorandum on how to smell out the anti-Conservative political agitator. This memorandum was never left in the Unit, but was taken away again by the police officer. When an officer or other ranker was suspected of "Left" tendencies he was placed under security observation. A letter marked "to be opened by the C.O. personally" and also "Most Secret" would arrive by registered mail. "X" would be stated to require observation, and a monthly report would be called for in the form of answers to a questionnaire. These reports had to be sent under "Secret" cover, and the suspect was spied upon by an officer whose normal duties enabled him to form an analysis of his political activities. This Gestapo agent was warned to use the utmost discretion not to arouse his quarry's suspicion. The correspondence was locked in the C.O.'s safe by the C.O. personally—or, if he trusted his adjutant implicitly, the papers would be given to him for safe custody. Any correspondence on the matter was addressed to a Gestapo chief officer *by name* at Headquarters. The type of question asked was: "How does he perform his duties? Is he willing and efficient? Does he criticise his superiors? What type of books and literature does he read? Does he give away pamphlets to the other men? Is he a 'barrack-room lawyer' advising men on how to get redress of grievance? Does he attempt to make contact with civilians?" When three or four reports had proved negative an instruction was received that the inquisition was closed, and the original letter giving the particulars of the man concerned had to be returned to the Gestapo chief. No copies of reports despatched remained on the file which temporarily housed them. When a positive result was obtained the offender, if overseas, had his tour of duty mysteriously curtailed. In some instances he was discharged from the forces and returned to civil life.

"So Mr. Churchill knows what he is talking about when he introduces the Gestapo red-herring, for hands are smirched with insidious attempts to pu the forces of those men who actively disagree w his political faith." P. Q.

SIR,—If Mr. Churchill is as deeply concer about the existence or possibility of a political po as he would have us believe, surely now is the ti for him to demonstrate that concern in action.

I make no apology for reverting to the case of t three members of the Freedom Press imprisoned Mr. Churchill's own administration. Wheth Gestapo methods are the exclusive perquisite Socialism I leave it to those who have followed t case to judge. The position has now arisen whe the liberty of these men rests at the mercy of the m who appeared in their trial as counsel for the prosec tion. If Sir Donald Somervell retains the sense legal propriety and responsibility which he has show in the past, he will exercise his power to release the and terminate a singularly discreditable episode. B until and unless that should occur, let nobody for that three men have already served over a month their 9-month sentence for the sole crime of havi ventured to hold certain opinions and to make tho opinions known.

The Royal Waterloo Hospital. ALEX COMFORT

WAR OFFICE AND THE PUBLIC

SIR,—A letter has been pinned up in West Lulwo Post office, signed by a Lieutenant Pymm (no les "for Adjutant, Gunnery Wing, A.F.V. Scho Lulworth Camp." He announces the perman closing of certain roads between Stoborough and t coast and says that "starting on 30 May, 1945, shooti will be taking place daily over the whole of the E Holme Range area." This edict permanently clos five miles of the loveliest part of the Dorset coa including Mupe Bay, Arish Mell, Worbarrow B and the western part of the Purbeck Hills.

This gunnery school started in 1916 with a m mile of coast between Lulworth Cove and Mu Bay. Ward Lock's guide-book says: "The acti of the War Office was accepted during the War, b when, after the end of hostilities, it was found th the camp was to be permanent, strong oppositi was aroused. It failed, however, to effect its object."

Is the same thing now to happen on the larg scale of modern warfare? Is the power behind Lie tenant Pymm again hastily producing a *fait accom* before the people—including those who have foug through the war—find out what has happened a ask why the shooting should not be done on Luneb Heath? P. THORNHILL

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

far as I know there is no anthology of the tion pieces in English literature; and imme- ely there is difficulty in remembering any des Eatanswill, which has swallowed them p in the enormous roaring mouth of its farce. presently pages from the electric Disraeli, early writer of film scenarios, come to mind; they are followed by memories of the hustings *Middlemarch* where Mr. Brook dithered y to disaster; by the window-breaking in *x Holt*, more window-breaking and muck- ng in *The Newcomes,* undergraduate politics *Tom Brown at Oxford*, and finally by the full ad of Meredith's political peacock's tail in *uchamp's Career.* That is where my reading s. I have never read Trollope's *Phineas Redux Ralph the Heir*; the last, Mr. Michael Sadleir , contains the best election episodes in English on. I stop at Meredith. *Beauchamp's Career* s up the political novels of the 19th century. s the warm discursion of a traveller in the uresque. We stand on the thick Surrey hills the high summer of Victorian prosperity in the flashing, bewildering, blinding noon Meredith's writing, where everything stands , dazed by its own brilliance.

he innocent reader who goes anthologising ng these novels will be amused and disturbed the relevance of his discoveries. A hundred rs have passed and we are still fighting one ther for a solution of the political and human blems raised by the machine. The voteless kman stands up in *Felix Holt*:

> "It's the fallacy of all monopolists," he was ying. "We know what monopolists are: men ho want to keep a trade all to themselves, under e pretence that they'll furnish the public with better article. We know what that comes : in some countries a poor man can't afford buy a spoonful of salt, and yet there's salt enough the world to pickle every living thing in it. hat's the sort of benefit monopolists do to man- ind. And there are the men who tell us we've let politics alone; they'll govern us better without ur knowing anything about it. We must mind ur business; we are ignorant; we've no time to tudy great questions. But I tell them this: the reatest question in the world is how to give every an a man's share in what goes on in life—not a ig's share, not a horse's share, not the share of machine fed with oil only to make it work and othing else. It isn't a man's share just to mind our pin-making, or your glass-blowings, and higgle bout your wages. . . ."

e speaker had no vote and was arguing for versal suffrage, the secret ballot and electoral ricts; we have these, but can we say we have e so very far beyond his words?

Elections oblige us to leave the abstract indigna- s of politics and to come down into the sand sweat, the cheating and the clowning, of the itical circus; and those of us who live where opponents have a safe seat, are at once thed by literature, the great consoler, and ed on to more violent quarrels, by this only topical note from *The Newcomes*:

> There were four candidates in the field for the epresentation of that borough. That old and ried member of Parliament, Mr. Bunce, was onsidered to be secure; and the Baronet's seat as thought to be pretty safe on account of his nfluence in the place. Nevertheless, the supporters ere confident for their champion, and that when he parties came to the poll, the extreme Liberals f the borough would divide their votes between im and the fourth candidate, the uncompromising adical, Mr. Barker.

Uncompromising Mr. Barker! He is the eric igniting figure in all these novels. Under name or another, he always reappears, Radical is the god, the demon or the problem the political novel. He is the spectacular, stocratic hero in *Sybil*. He is Felix Holt, the ry prig in George Eliot. He is the coarse beguiling wrong-headed man who seduces est Tom Brown, after his handsome school- s, from the seasoned Stilton of Tory politics. dicals owe their rabid beliefs to their r digestions, Samuel Butler thought, and it sums up the comfortable Victorian superstition. Medically speaking, the Radicals were the children who had failed to adjust their stomachs to the excesses and the deficits of Victorian diet. They were sickened by gorging or starvation.) And then, in Meredith, Mr. Barker turns up as the passionate and chivalrous Beauchamp and as the gaunt Dr. Shrapnel. Beauchamp's digestion is splendid, but Shrapnel's, one suspects, is not. He rants like Carlyle. The two great crimes the Tory landowners charge him with, before they charge him with treason, atheism, blood-lust and a puzzling mixture of sexual irregularity and dull middle-class morals, are his defence of poachers and his habit of dieting. For them, to attack the game laws was as good as asking for a weak navy.

The generic Mr. Barker is a touchy and uncomfortable figure. The landed aristocracy, Whig and Tory, had enough on their hands contending with the sordid, huckstering manufacturers of the north, without having to deal with this new Radical enemy, not created by themselves, but the very spawn of the new evil towns. Mr. Barker is not a gentleman and he is not gentle. He is harsh. His imagination is dialectical. Esther Lyon says to Felix Holt:

> "I think you boast too much of your truth-telling, Mr. Holt. That virtue is apt to be easy to people when they wound only others and not themselves. Telling the truth often means no more than taking a liberty."

Sensibility is not a quality of Mr. Barker; he is a puritan. Or rather his sensibility is awake to public emotion and is at sea in private feeling. His advice is excellent; his manners are bad. Shall we say, he has moral sensibility, where his opponents are morally obtuse? As Dr. Shrapnel or Felix Holt, he is not more egotistical than his enemies; and he is far more generous and humane; but his egotism has been brought up on the stony acres of conscience, and, like the egotism of the uprooted masses of the factory towns, it has to live in a state of war in order to live at all. Courtly men like Everard Romfrey have merely to sit on their land and fire off wisdom at their convenience with the ripe assurance of reformed burglars. There are, of course, moments when extremes meet, and Meredith, whose swift and ironical mind always sought people at their point of white-hot intensity, noted with delight when Tory and Radical seemed to fuse, before flying apart again. After all, they had the same enemy: moderation. Moderation was as contemptible to a eupeptic and fighting Earl, still living in the 12th century, as it was to a 19th-century revolutionary who was beginning to sharpen his weapons on the new seething grindstone of the class war.

Meredith is good on the subject, because he was a Radical himself—a poetic Radical; they had been prosaic. And because he lavishes the malice of his poetical gift on the cause he opposes, his indignations are festive and picturesque. One would a thousand times sooner have Nevil Beauchamp and Dr. Shrapnel on one's side than that awful puritan Felix Holt, who savages Esther Lyon for reading Byron and browbeats this very nice girl until she goes sobbing with him along the thorny path of political reformation. Meredith was surely right in insisting that, if progress was a fight, there were gaiety and dash in the fighting spirit.

The Radicals of George Eliot and Meredith are rich men. Half their story is the trouble they have with the offended interests of their own class and the offended tastes of their supporters; Nevil Beauchamp loses votes because he has been in love with a French lady and wants to keep the museums open—those preserves of vice and temptation—on Sundays. But the lasting aspect of British elections is their low comedy. Here, George Eliot is excellent in the speeches:

> "Johnson, bear in mind there are two ways of speaking an audience will always like: one is to tell them what they don't understand; and the other is to tell them what they're used to."

In Parson Jack, who throws nuts to the crowd to keep them quiet, she caught the clown whom the crowd always loves. And then, elections beautifully draw out the wondrous human quality of stodginess in which, for better and for worse, George Eliot was a connoisseur. We remember the exquisite shopkeeper, Mr. Rose, "the independent man" who, with his two votes, was going to vote for both candidates, for "the most an independent man can do is to please all." One is inclined to say that Meredith excels in the canvassing just because he wrote simply about it. After the vibrating, pointillist light of his customary manner, it is a relief to find pages without a metaphor and characters who are not disappearing into their own *arrière pensées*. Mr. Tripehallow lets Beauchamp know that he has heard all about the French *affaire*:

> "You young nobs capering over our heads—I nail you down to your morals. Politics secondary. A-dew, as the dying spirit remarked to weeping friend."

Or there is the interchange between bland Mr. Oggler, who runs adverbs in pairs, a forerunner of the disciples of the success-religions, with his "honestly and sincerely":

> "I really and truly don't know what it is not to know happiness."
>
> "Then you don't know God," said Carpendike, like a voice from a cave.

These are the pearls of a canvasser's pilgrimage. Then there are the candidates' sordid friends:

> "I repeat, my dear sir" (says Nevil Beauchamp's seamy and embarrassing adviser who has just written an awful puff of him in the *Gazette*), "the infant candidate delights in his honesty, like the babe in its nakedness, the beautiful virgin in her innocence. So he does; but he discovers it's time for him to wear clothes in a contested election. And what's that but to preserve the outlines pretty correctly, whilst he doesn't shock and horrify the optics. A dash of conventionalism makes the whole civilised world kin."

And again:

> "Politics, Commander Beauchamp, involves the doing of lots of disagreeable things to ourselves and our relations; it's positive. I'm a soldier of the Great Campaign; and who knows it better than I, sir? It's climbing the greasy pole for the leg o' mutton that makes the mother's heart ache for the jacket and the nether garments she mended neatly, if she didn't make them. Mutton or no mutton, there's grease for certain."

But where Meredith sweeps the board is in epigram, generalisation and the theatrically ridiculous. He has—we must deplore it—frequent lapses of taste; his brain is such a chaos of metaphors that they all have to come out, regardless of the character and situation. One is expected to smile at Dr. Shrapnel, but one is gradually asked to respect and admire him and to see that he has been disgracefully and brutally treated by the bumptious Earl and his disingenuous lady. Yet Meredith can't resist giving us the unforgettable sight of Dr. Shrapnel, covered in flour paste which has seamed him from head to toe like the ribs of a fish and walking the streets on polling day like the spectre of a cod. It is wonderful, but—like so many things in Meredith—it is a bit too much. Frankly, it is Teutonic. What a disaster occurred to English literature when Meredith was sent to school in Germany.

The best things in him are Gallic, or what he would have called Gallic: "He is no true Radical. He is a philosopher—one of the flirts, the butterflies of politics." The Tories are "geese on the common, hissing at every foot they have to yield." "Retreat and menace," is their motto. There is the delightful scene where Nevil tackles Grancey Lespel, the Whig, and tells him he is politically dead. Nevil corners the unfortunate man and downs him with the words, "Dead, my dear Mr. Lespel," every time he speaks. "Dead, dead, my dear sir, dead"—it is like one of those refrains from the swiftest climaxes of Molière comedy; until poor Mr. Lespel swings round with his hands over his ears, bawls out "Bo!" and bounces away. Mr. Lespel's "Bo" was thought rather witty, such is the state of society's nerves during an election.

V. S. PRITCHETT

TASTE AND STYLE

British Architects and Craftsmen. By SACHEVERELL SITWELL. *Batsford.* 21s.

This book is misleadingly named: its title and the sub-title "*a survey of taste design and style during three centuries*—1600 *to* 1830"—suggests an objective and scholarly work. It is, in fact, a notebook in which the author has jotted down his personal impressions of the things in the period which appeal to him, and a work of enthusiasm rather than scholarship. The method of exposition, the charm of the book, and its principle defects are alike illustrated in the following passage, in which Mr. Sitwell is showing us a fine shop and upper part of about 1760:

> The other half is the bedroom of another tenant, Mrs. Seago, who courteously, but in broken English, let us in to admire the Rococo panelling and high Palladian door.
>
> Such is the old shop, and the house above it, in Artillery Lane. Formerly it had been a grocer's, but its original purpose and the name of the family are forgotten. It is a peculiar sensation to find this old relic in that poor and dingy street. But the old houses of the Spitalfields silk weavers are not far away, in a district that has particular interest for myself because of the Whitechapel murders of Jack the Ripper, and because of the hobbies of the old silk weavers who bred the red and yellow pouter pigeon to perfection and excelled also in tulips, auriculas, and other florist's flowers, as well as in the breeding of small spaniels.

It is fair to say that it is not a survey of a period, but an excursion through Renaissance and Classic England with a guide whose taste is for the Rococo and the Baroque, and for great works carried out on a great scale. Justice is done to what is grandiose, and sometimes more than justice to what is ornate; but those minor works, distinguished by the simplicity and grace that are the special virtues of the English Renaissance architect and craftsman, are quite inadequately dealt with. Then, sometimes, the approach is dazzling rather than helpful: the Radcliffe camera is perhaps not all it should be.

> Indeed, domed rotundas have only been achieved by the very greatest masters, as all will agree who have seen the still more beautiful, octagonal, ninth-century Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem, or have but admired its image in the background of Raphael's *Sposalizio*, in the Brera at Milan, or again in the fresco by Perugino in the Sistine Chapel.

Such a method of illustration is stimulating, and can be informative. But very few of us have been to Jerusalem, and not many to the Brera at Milan, or to the Sistine Chapel; the comparison might have been given force by a description of the Dome of the Rock, or an illustration. The author, however, is above all that, and prints no bibliography (his index, for good measure, mentions neither the Dome of the Rock nor the Radcliffe Camera with which it is compared). It may be that he had not the space in a book of this size to go into such details; one can, however, wish he had made room for relevant information by being a little more ruthless with Jack the Ripper, the armfuls of feathers and flowers, the pouter pigeons, the small spaniels, and the dramatisations of what is to be seen in Ackerman Aquatints. But that is perhaps to ask Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell to be someone other than Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell.

It is an agreeable enough entertainment, but while one is being entertained one becomes sensible of something seriously wrong. In the books on architecture published in the last century, and in the early part of this one, it was the custom to pay tribute to the arts and crafts of the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, and then to lament the cultural death that fell on the country in the cold, rational and inhuman eighteenth century. After singing a suitably depressing requiem, one allowed the sun to break through again and acclaimed the new dawn in the persons of whatever group of architects was the fashion at the time. This writing produced the deadly values which survive in the older editions of Murray's Guides, Methuen's *Little Guides* and the *Highways and Byways* series; in which all the treasures of the eighteenth century figure as "Italianate mansions" or "modern structures of no architectural or historic interest"—those values which justified the destruction of so much. Mr. Sitwell writes in exactly the same way, merely bringing the period of cultural death forward a century. "Nash was an artist of the third or fourth order," "Soane was predestined to be last, not first." "But architecture, despite appearances (1817), lay dying." "As late as 1830 it was still possible to build a charming house." And so, pointing out that Wyatt's use of the Classic *and* Sham Gothic styles shows grave weakness of character, and that Pugin died insane, we lay architecture in the cold, cold ground. The old Gothic revival dawn has become midnight now, and the alarum no longer set for poor Pugin but pushed forward to Philip Webb. The dawn breaks with Morris's house at Beckenham and becomes luminous under the rosy fingers of Norman Shaw, Voysey, and Lutyens. There is hope yet, but no virtue whatever between 1830 and 1880. Presumably it is Victorian architecture which is to be "modern and of no interest" for the next fifty years, and to be blackguarded and demolished indiscriminately for a hundred. Mr. Sitwell talks of a very great number of vanished eighteenth-century buildings with regret, and with horror at the vandalism of the destroyers: many of them were lost because a generation of critical writers who followed the current fashions too obediently, informed public opinion that they were the worthless products of a dark age. It is sad to see the die being cast in the same mould all over again.

ANTHONY WEST

REACTION FROM BEVERIDGE

Lapses from Full Employment. By A. C. PIGOU. *Macmillan.* 4s. 6d.

Professor Pigou must be regarded as the Elder Statesman of British economics, and the publication of a book by him which is designed "to provide a background for the discussion of practical schemes for attacking the problem of unemployment," is an event of political importance. It is, in fact, his reply to the Keynesian economic theory which has been further developed during the war and which found its most striking expression in Sir William Beveridge's report on *Full Employment in a Free Society*. It is, so to speak, a companion volume of Professor Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*.

Professor Pigou refrains from "discussing any of these schemes," contenting himself with diagnosis only. But diagnosis cannot be unrelated to therapy. Once a diagnosis has been established the treatment is to a large extent determined. No disclaimer can get over this fact. Professor Pigou may restrict himself to a purely formal treatment of the most vital problem of economic analysis, but he cannot avoid on many points coming to very practical conclusions and recommendations. Where he does so his wording is such that an unwary reader might be induced to draw unwarranted and untrue conclusions as to policy, even though elegant qualifications safeguard the author.

The main theme of the book is that Lapses from Full Employment (the title itself subtly suggests that we are confronted not with the crisis of the individualist system of *laissez-faire* but with some small blemishes in a well-working order) are caused mainly, if not entirely, by unduly high or rigid wages. This startling conclusion, reminiscent of the economy campaign of Lord May, Mr. Chamberlain and of Dr. Brüning, follows with unexceptionable logic from his initial assumptions.

And here is really the rub. First of all to simplify assumptions, on the basis of which a model of the economic system can be elaborated, is justifiable as an aid to analysis in every science. Economics is no exception. But, in order to be able to apply the conclusions of this abstract analysis to the world of real things and to be able to claim to have "set out in clear light some of the principal influences by which the employm situation is affected," these assumptions must a tolerably faithful picture of what happens practice. Professor Pigou's model fails in this In fact, his assumptions assume the prob away: we are invited to believe that a mo world in which entrepreneurs have no expec tions, and in which lenders and borrowers identical, is a suitable aid in analysing the busin cycle. We are then subtly led to accept pattern of real life an economic model *in wh national income increases with increasing rates interest*, and in which the anticipation of a slu does not cause a decline in investment. A basis for conclusions which can be applied our own troubles, this is as useful as the co templation of Stephenson's "Rocket" would be a man who wanted to understand a V.2.

All this is not to say that the right level relative wages is not an essential factor in ma taining stability or that the possibility of a wa spiral in conditions of full employment does raise (political rather than economic) problems great importance. But Professor Pigou mig be reminded that it was the modern economis Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Kalecki and others, who ha drawn attention to this problem. Classic economists *assumed full employment* and at same time assumed perfect mobility and stabili With these (in practice mutually exclusiv assumptions they could not tackle the proble at all; it did not exist for them.

Professor Pigou's treatment of the gene fluctuations in demand is also purely formal character, and cannot bring any enlightenme on our practical problems. The unnecessari complicated formulæ, which will puzzle no mathematical readers, might perhaps appeal the mathematician, because they follow from simple fact that employment, though it can f below, can never rise above, 100 per cent. T economist, on the other hand, will be somewh perplexed to find any useful purpose in th exercise in pure logic.

Starting with Lord Keynes's book on t General Theory of Employment, an almo complete unanimity of opinion has been achiev on the methods of tackling unemployment. Wh is needed now is a realistic study of the practic problems that will arise when these policies a applied in practice. Professor Pigou's metho of grappling with this vital question is the fir of the expected lapses into the Alice in Wonde land economics which, through the depressio and the rise of national socialism, has brought to the present pass.

T. BALOGH

A NOBLE HOUSE

The Dynasty of Stowe. By G. WILSO KNIGHT. *The Fortune Press.* 10s. 6d.

Stowe is a museum, and may almost be sai to summarise English history for over a hundre years. For a long time it was in the possessio of the Grenvilles, who—not content with tryin to rule the country—devoted themselves to fillin the estate with all sorts of treasures, and in th process brought themselves down from enormou wealth to absolute penury, and the last of th family died almost unnoticed. The estate wa sold, and is now a public school, but the memorie remain, and the charm lingers.

Mr. Knight, arriving there from abroad t take up a mastership, was captivated by what h saw, and has in this book given us his impression He is like a man with a little knowledge o music, for example, listening for the first time to performance of Beethoven or Bach, and recordin in his diary not only what he hears, but the sur prise his discoveries arouse in him. Later, h edits his diary and adds a good deal of histor and a summary of his opinions. The result that this book, though not a long one, cover an extraordinarily wide field, and that its arrangement, as the writer himself seems to perceive is not clear. In fact, he touches on all sorts o themes as they happen to occur to him.

Thus, after a preliminary chapter dealing with "Arrival," Mr. Knight gives us a disserta- n on the Public School, as Dr. Arnold made it. parently Stowe aims at realising the Arnoldian a with the modifications which a hundred rs have suggested. On one very important nt I do not think Mr. Knight is quite clear. Stowe to establish what Arnold never alto- her approved—the system of compulsory nes? There is certainly much to be said inst it. If a boy, like Martin in "Tom Brown," interested in other things, why should he be gged from them in order to kick a football wield a cricket-bat?

Next follows a very elaborate chapter, nominally Discipline but really a fantasy *de omnibus us et quibusdam aliis*, hard to read and hard to into the scheme of things; for when we have re or less mastered the abstractions of Discip- e, we are plunged into the concreteness of tory, and here the slightest suggestion leads author to talk of almost anything, much of ich, though it will be of interest to the Stowe ys, will be perfectly familiar to the ordinary der of history. Who does not know that Pope d Swift eulogised Stowe, or that William Pitt, o married Hester Grenville, was a close friend her brother Richard Earl Temple, and re- ved from him the magnificent gift which laid foundation on which his splendid career was ilt? (Incidentally, Mr. Knight probably aggerates the influence which Temple person- y exerted on Pitt's political work, and is in- ned to misjudge the relative importance of the o men.)

But what he tells us of the first Grenville ke of Buckingham is, I think, new, and is tainly interesting as a portrait of an eccentric. found the atmosphere of the nineteenth ntury quite unsuited to the Grenville traditions, d instead of working, like Richard Earl Temple, infuse the Stowe spirit into the politics of the ne, abandoned public life in disgust. "It is," said to George IV, "so strange that I cannot eathe it, and I retire to avoid it." Mr. Knight ves us an admirable account of the tour the ke took with this purpose. He used a thermo- ter to take the temperature of Arethusa's ll, a device to calculate the height of the temple, stop-watch for timing the falls of Terni; and arranged Sicilian airs for the guitar for ree voices and the piano. Everywhere he had owe in mind: the Roman palaces would be a sson for the owners of Stowe and Blenheim. We are now approaching the meridian of Greenwich, and I contemplate with feelings of sorrow the stars which for so many years I have contemplated on the meridian of my home. *Alpha Lyrae* I have taught myself to consider the star presiding over Stowe."

His son, deserting the traditional family Whiggism, and actually becoming such a Tory as to think George III one of the best and wisest of British sovereigns, lent his name to one clause in the Reform Act of 1832, but is better known for the final extravagance which brought the house to ruin. After his father's death in 1839 he gave an entertainment to Queen Victoria the expense of which must have been prodigious: Mr. Knight says that the footmen are reported to have been disguised bailiffs. Be this so or not, he became bankrupt, and the old Stowe perished when he died.

In the remainder of the book there is much to interest—the description of the school-life in wartime, the chapel services, and Mr. Knight's religious reflections—not all of which, of course, will command general assent. There is, for instance, a curious remark on the Papal dispute with Galileo, which reminds one of Newman's famous sophistry as to the metaphysical meaning of distance and motion; and his ideas on Puritanism will not satisfy everybody.

I must not omit to mention the dozen illustrations, which are without exception beautiful and charming.

E. E. KELLETT

A SELF-EDUCATED MAN

Alfred Williams: His Life and Work. By LEONARD CLARK. *George.* 17*s.* 6*d.*

Camden described Wiltshire as "a region which is exceeding fertile, and plentifull of all things, yea and for the variety thereof, passing pleasant and delightsome." Alfred Williams was a son of Wiltshire and the county's poet in prose and verse, and his literary reputation may survive because of the work which derives its strength from his sense of a "delightsome" place. He was, however, to find his native county anything but "plentifull," and later, when grudging recognition forced him to resort to market gardening, the reverse of "fertile." For twenty-two years he worked nine hours a day as hammerman in the G.W.R. works at Swindon, rising at four in the morning to study, reading during the dinner-hour and poring over books until midnight. By such forced marches he taught himself Latin, Greek, French and Sanskrit. "I used to print a troublesome Greek word on the toe of my boot in the morning," and when, with health undermined, he was compelled to leave the works, he wrote "Vici" in chalk over his furnace. The claim was justified, for this book is a signal record of courage.

Its subject, however, somehow gets buried beneath a mountain of laborious detail. There is a monotonous repetition of each minute negotiation with every publisher, of Williams's recurring fears of the critics' reception, and also of the names of recipients of gift copies. Later this is paralleled by wearisome accounts of his ill health. There is a lamentable lack of selection. Mr. Clark complains that "the worst of reviews is that instead of whetting the appetite they often satiate it." This is what comes near to happening in this biography. If, in Hazlitt's phrase, he has "aggrandised the trivial," he certainly has not added "the charm of novelty to the familiar." The daily round, the common task are not imaginatively illumined, and the unique quality of Williams's personality gets overlaid. To have impressed such diverse Wiltshiremen as Lord Esmond Fitzmaurice and Reuben George there must have been more to Williams than emerges in this book. Space is used in making excessive claims for his literary reputation which could have been better employed in bringing to life the man himself.

There were odd contradictions about Williams. He condemned much of the poetry of 1913 as "vulgar, violent slang," and such poets as Bridges, Yeats and Hardy produced in him "a veritable disgust of modern tack." Yet at a Poets' Gathering he was disappointed at not meeting Ella Wheeler Wilcox! The fact that though loving his wife dearly he suffered her to send him money out of her meagre separation allowance of 12*s.* 6*d.* a week, is reiterated but never examined. Mary remains a ghost of personified devotion, and her distress at his romantic friendship with his Irish nurse is hinted at and dismissed.

The book is a conscientious narration of the life of that creation of Disraeli—the "conservative working man." Williams had a literary aptitude which stopped far short of genius, backed by courage and curiosity. A shorter and more penetrating study of his character would have served him better. Little attention has been paid to the book's illustrations which are indifferently printed and set out on the page to their worst possible advantage.

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NEW VERSE

Marching Soldier. By JOYCE CARY. *Michael Joseph.* 2s. 6d.

We Who Are Fortunate. By ALAN ROOK. *Routledge.* 5s.

This Other Planet. By R. N. CURREY. *Routledge.* 5s.

Hampdens Going Over. By HERBERT CORBY. *Poetry London.* 4s. 6d.

Notebooks of Night. By EDMUND WILSON. *Secker and Warburg.* 7s. 6d.

The Dorking Thigh. By WILLIAM PLOMER. *Cape.* 3s. 6d.

Those who gave up reading poetry after the last war complain from time to time that no poetry has been written during this one. The contrary I believe to be true. More has been written in the last ten years, of a better quality and of more enduring scope. To begin with, the poets of the last war had to break silence in order to write poetry at all; Robert Nichols and others have made very plain to us the tragic gulf that separated soldiers from civilians. Hence the quietism of one writer, the falsetto screams of another; you get both in Sassoon, the most representative if not the most talented of these poets.

That gulf between combatant and non-combatant, between those who are killed and those who live on to read about it, has been narrowed by experience. There was the experience handed down from last time; Brooke's trumpets already seemed remote in 1939; Owen's blind men were wheeled out into the sun. There was the experience, as war got into its swing, spreading from concentration camps and fox-holes in the desert to blitzed towns and torpedoed merchantmen. With war taking on more even risks, war poetry has gained immensely in complexity and balance. So much will be obvious to anyone familiar with contemporary writing; for these remarks apply equally to prose and to verse. Some of the reporting in this war has reached a very high level indeed.

Marching Soldier will, I believe, take its place along with such narratives as *Arnhem Lift* among the permanent contributions to war literature. It adds a little to our stock of experience. Rarely has the soldier's sense of duty and separation been so urgently expressed. The soldier is different, he has been trained for this difference which in battle will cut him off from the rest of the world and ally him with his enemy.

Hear, the guns are rolling, rolling through the town,
Do not look so pale, houses, when your windows shake,
Those drums are not a threat, but our fever
A soldier's fever, burning slow, burning long:
We are soldiers, whose thoughts go marching, marching,
Whose feet are boots, whose heads are iron, whose backs are saddles.
Do not throw us bouquets, kind ladies, for our boots to spoil,
Only tell us, if you may
What is this port, what is that sea?

Women throwing flowers ("They weep for us but their eyes are only blessings Because we go"), children playing secretly, men hostile or indifferent, unknown streets, skies and landscapes, provide a meaningless interlude to the rehearsed movements of battle. To the soldier lying in a bomb-hole the tank on the corner says everything, the pillar, the fountain, the waxlike bloom nothing. And when, during an advance, the trail of prisoners pass the other way, there is a kinship in their greater helplessness. "Comrades," say their eyes, "we are sold into confusion. You are victors. How should we answer your question?" To which the victor replies:

Comrades, because you are soldiers like us,
Because you are comrades to one another,
Because you have soldiers' eyes, soldiers' ears,
You have seen the summer trees watching with rifles,
The harvest of wires.
Together we heard the bullets cry, Blind, blind, the shells complain, oh deafness,
We have seen the judgment written on our souls.

A modern soldier is a trained athlete, a condemned man behind bars. In his somnabulism, as expressed by Mr. Cary and other poets, he undergoes a double experience, removed from the rest of his life, as though one were called upon at the same time to lie on an operating table and to perform the operation. *Marching Soldier* gives us a remarkable sense of this delirium as it affects those who suffer it most actively. Mr. Cary is a born writer, if only on this particular occasion a poet. His poetic means are both simple and effective. This imaginative journey into the present war, it should be pointed out, has been made by a man of fifty-seven.

Mr. Rook, Mr. Currey and Mr. Corby seem rather tame by comparison. I was disappointed by *We Who Are Fortunate,* which contains nothing so sharp as his earlier descriptive pieces. There is a monotony of tone, also, despite the fact that half of these poems were written while the author was still in the Forces and the after he had been invalided out. Perhaps no accident that the best of them distil mono ("In Time of Rain" and "Second Fron Mr. Rook is worth reading. *This Other Pl* and *Hampdens Going Over* combine poetry special reporting. The first gives us landsca from Europe, India and Africa, vividly realis Mr. Currey has a jauntiness of style that is unattractive. The second leaves a rather dee impression of life in the R.A.F., the tarmac, bars, the missions, the planes lost, with so life-like portraits in the sonnet form.

Notebooks of Night is the occasional— occasional—verse of a distinguished critic. includes jaunty ballads, sentimental rever parodies and prose rhapsodies in which intermittently one can detect the intelligence political fervour of Mr. Wilson's criticism. title, I gather, comes from the fact that seve of these poems are the nightcap reflections afte hard day's work—spent, for example, in editi Scott Fitzgerald's letters. Mr. Wilson is no po no versifier either. The parodies of Mr. MacLe and of James Joyce seem to me the best pie in a book that is meant for admirers only.

Mr. William Plomer's *The Dorking Thigh* occasional too, in a sense. The eleven pie collected here have appeared at intervals duri the last twenty years, and they explore a branc line of their author's lively sensibility. M Plomer is a master of the sardonic ballad, Belloc was of the cautionary tale; the cruel indeed, of the satire may—and I hope will shock some readers as much as it will delig others. These poems seize, as the blurb puts those "moments when the monstrous see inseparable from the ridiculous." The hideo silliness of the Hotel Magnificent, Yokohama; a pleasure beach at Cannes; of a dumb platinu blonde (literally dumb) waiting for her man; the newly-weds looking over a Tudor snugge on an estate; of bookworms in the Museu Reading Room and vegetarians among the doodl bugs—silliness of an exasperating and shiny ki that is hard to avoid everywhere to-day h stirred Mr. Plomer on rare occasions to verse terrifying as a Japanese sword-dance. Reade of the NEW STATESMAN will remember the shock reading "The Flying Bum, 1944;" there h been an emendation of the last revelatory lin which reads now, "A *lightly roasted* rump horse." Whether this improves on the "raw an bleeding rump," I'm not at all sure. Mr. Plomer

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rakes the ridiculousness of vanity with a won- ful felicity. New to me is his " rose-red sissy as old as time."

e cannot whistle, always rises late,
Is good at indoor sports and parlour-tricks,
Mauve is his favourite colour, and his gait
Suggests a pea-hen walking on hot bricks.

e prances forward with his hands outspread
And folds all comers in a gay embrace,
wavy toupee on his hairless head,
A fixed smile on his often-lifted face.

My dear ! " he lisps, to whom all men are dear,
" How perfectly enchanting of you ! " ; turns
owards his guests and twitters, " Look, who's
here !
Do come and help us fiddle while Rome burns ! "

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G. W. Stonier

Week-end Competitions

No. 806

by Tom Paine

ames Burnham's famous book, *The Managerial olution*, was recently reviewed by one of our temporaries on the assumption that it was a guide managerial efficiency which should be useful to young demobilised soldier returning to an in- trial job. The usual prizes are offered for short ews of not more than 100 words each of famous ks by reviewers who similarly show themselves er acquainted with the titles than with the contents he book reviewed. Entries by July 17th.

SULT OF COMPETITION No. 803

by Roger Marvell

Prizes of Six Guineas are offered for the best erses wishing happiness to Nicholas and Jonathan, win brothers born on the eve of Victory. Not ore than 16 lines.

port by Roger Marvell

number of entrants seized on the fact that athan and Nicholas are names symbolising the S.A. and Russia ; of these J.A.W. is the happiest, ugh the wish that the twins may be mended with ammer suggests the Public School system at its t resolute. J. R. Till has a neat first stanza :—

Guardian spirits of these brats,
  Make them *little sceptics*,
Disbelieving fireside chats
Of revered dyspeptics.

And Willy Tadpole ends no less charmingly :—

And may you wear, to keep you warm,
Clothing never uniform.

Others who came near a prize are E. W. Fordham, R. J. P. Hewison, Guy Innes, L. V. Upward, Allan M. Laing and Elizabeth Meldrum. I recommend a guinea each to J. A. W., William Bliss, Stanley J. Sharpless, Leslie Johnson, Joyce Johnson and Frank Spooner.

Featly may this benison
Light on Nicholas and John,
Twinned beneath that lucky star,
Vigil of the end of War.

Nicholas and Jonathan !
Surely it was Heaven's plan ;
Two such names were given them,
Twin buds on a single stem.

For two mighty Powers we be
(Sharers in the Victory),
Blazoned on each baby's name,
Omens of a double fame.

Russians Nicholas be-pray,
Jonathan's just U.S.A. ;
So may stars and stripes befriend ye,
Sickle prune, and Hammer mend ye.

J. A. W.

Hail Twins whom a brave mother bore,
Begotten in the stress of war !
Did you, I wonder, ere your birth
Discuss the life to come on Earth,*

And share your parents' hopes and fears
Through blood and toil and sweat and tears ?
You could not guess that you would be
Born on the eve of Victory.

Thrice happy Twins who thus were born
Under the eyelids of the dawn,
My Nicholas and Jonathan,
Be happy through the allotted span.

And, O glad harbingers of Spring,
Enjoy the fruits long Summers bring
And see in Peace this century pass,
My Jonathan and Nicholas !

* See " *Religio Medici.*"

William Bliss

Wearing blue-prints 'stead of nappies,
Learning what synthetic pap is,
With a tin hat for a tuffet,
Through the grave new world you'll rough it.

Nicholas and Jonathan,
Will you go to Dartington ?
Shall I wish you each a Rolls
In an age without Controls ?

Or a sweet sufficiency
In a brave bureaucracy ?
Or artistic temperament ;
Youth ecstatically mis-spent ?

Meanwhile, on the nursery floor,
Life moves golden as before.

God and Beveridge keep you bonny,
Victory-cradled Nick and Johnny.

Stanley J. Sharpless

Nicholas, Jonathan, like as two pins,
Here's to your healths in a couple of gins.
(That's the last bottle, no more in my bins ;
Lucky you didn't turn out to be quins !)
This is my toast. As existence begins
May wails be outnumbered by gurgles and grins,
As the years hasten, and on the earth spins,
May no future black-out endanger your shins,
And may you not always endure, for your sins,
The Left as the Outs and the Tories as Ins.
See that hate dies and that brotherhood wins,
Or you'll be eternally saving your skins.
May we find Nicholas buddies with Finns,
And Jonathan feeding the world out of tins.
Grow double in everything, barring your chins ;
Happiness (Byron) was born to be twins.

Leslie Johnson

There are no twins I'd rather honour than
These new-born Nicholas and Jonathan.
With vodka cocktails let us toast the birth
Of this new brotherhood upon the Earth.
Comrade and buddy lying in one cot,
Under one coverlet (its pattern's got
The sickle, hammer, stars, stripes intertwined).
If such twins come, can Peace be far behind ?

Joyce Johnson

I would the love of men were fixt as ours
  Which grew these perfum'd Maytime flow'rs,
Pale *Nicholas* and *Jonathan* (conceiv'd
When wee in *Europe's* constancie beleev'd).
  Twin Pilgrims from a single Cell
  Who travell'd lone, God doe them well.
'Twere so, if men, in greeting *Victorie*
From *Warr's* dark wombe, still single-cell'd would bee.

Then *Peace* were Plenty (not *Warr's* soft mock),
  Tears lovers' cristalls, *Fear* a rock :
Peacocks might sing sweet musick, Buffoones weep,
And grosse Apes bathe where *Beauty's* pools lie deep.
  I would it soe, for these Twins' sakes :
  Soe men must learne that God thus makes
Men :—As though *Nicholas* were *Jonathan*,
Or *Jonathan* as *Nicholas* began.

Frank Spooner

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The report was adopted.

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